the weekly Standard

IAN SMITH, WE HARDLY KNEW YE
ROBERT D. NOVAK

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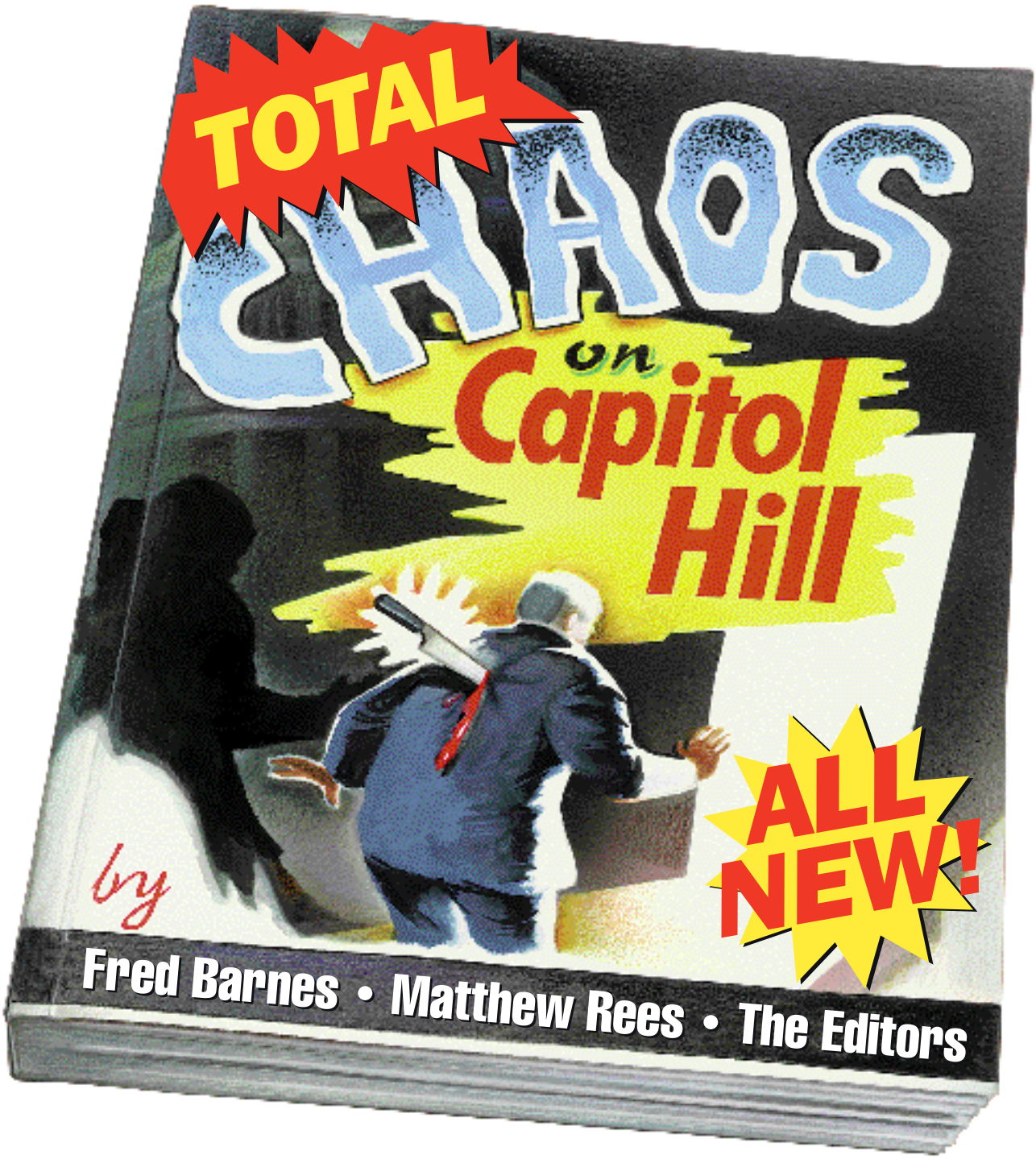


**The Sins of a Self-Styled Citizen Lobby**
MARY JACOBY

**Alexandra Danilova and François Furet, RIP**
CLAUDIA WINKLER • KENNETH R. WEINSTEIN

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the weekly Standard

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# The King of Id

He's destroyed the sport of boxing. His coif looks as if his scalp is projectile-vomiting. He has murdered business associates and the English language with equal aplomb. But only in the America of 1997 could Don King have received a humanitarian award from the NAACP. Last week, the civil-rights organization bestowed its President's Award on King—not for fortitude in the face of his current insurance fraud charges, but for being, in President Kweisi Mfume's phrase, "a significant supporter of social causes" and an athletic pioneer comparable to Jackie Robinson.

King concurred, calling himself a "farmer in the field of civil rights." He said his accomplishments have gone unheralded since he has "never looked for any fanfare on this." Also unheralded at the ceremony were some of his other humanitarian efforts: Like how he insisted recently that Oliver McCall, who was undergoing drug rehabilitation, had to fight Lennox Lewis anyway (McCall ended up having a breakdown in the ring). Or the time he gave new recruit Pinklon Thomas a diamond ring, only to send him an invoice for the gift when Thomas hit the skids. And then there are the 25-plus lawsuits from former fighters saying they've been fleeced, the crack-addicted homeless protégés, the three grand jury investigations, the FBI undercover probe, the 23 counts of federal tax evasion he eventually beat, the 1954 murder of somebody trying to rob one of his gambling houses (it was ruled self-defense). And his crowning moment: As the biggest numbers runner in 1960s Cleveland, he stomped Sam Garrett, a drug-user with one kidney who owed him $600, until, as Jack Newfield put it, Garrett's "brain broke like an egg."

The outrageousness of the award to King commendably set Bob Herbert's teeth on edge. "The NAACP has lost its grip," Herbert writes in an extraordinary July 18 *New York Times* column. "There is a disoriented and at times paranoid quality about the organization that more than any other did the difficult, dangerous and noble work of desegregating America." Herbert went on to lash out at the much-lauded Kweisi Mfume, the former congressman who took over the NAACP last year to restore its reputation after a series of financial scandals. Contending that "the greatest threat to black children since slavery [is] their abandonment by their own fathers," Herbert then points out that "Mfume, unfortunately, is not well-positioned to lead [the] fight" on behalf of black children because he himself sired "five children by four women in 21 months."

What you are hearing is the sound of a once-great, once-unimpeachable organization losing its legitimacy.

legitimacy.

## But Wait, There's More . . .

Our president appeared at the same NAACP convention that honored Don King, and spoke some amazing words. "We just announced an initiative on Africa, on promoting economic development in Africa," he said to applause. "And there was a lot of excitement about it. We had a lot of Republican congressmen interested in it because they think we can make a lot of money there." (The president hastened to add that "I don't mean that in a bad way." Sure.)

But insulting Republicans wasn't the purpose of the anecdote. "Why," the president asked, "are we in a good position to do well" in Africa? His answer: "Because of you. Because of you." *You*, of course, meaning "black people." We recall that in 1992, Ross Perot became the focus of a two-day hysteria when he spoke before the NAACP convention and said: "It's gonna be a long, hot summer. I don't have to tell you who gets hurt first when this sort of thing happens, do I? You people do. Your people do."

Delegates to the NAACP fell all over themselves taking offense at Perot's words, but seemed to love the president's, even though the condescending tone and patronizing spirit were exactly the same. The president then went into a peroration on economic ties that leads one to wonder whether he has ever read the Declaration of Independence.

"Why are we in a good position to unite all of Latin America with us in a common economic group early in the next century? Because of the Hispanic Americans, all the Latinos. Why are we in a good position to avoid having Asia become a separate economic bloc and a destabilizing force in the world? In no small measure because of all the Asian Americans in this country. Why do we have some hope of being a major force for peace in the Middle



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East? Because of all the Jewish Americans here and the increasingly active and constructive Arab American community here."

Thus the president takes identity politics into an entirely new realm: Call it identity economics. Are we the only ones who find these remarks by the president truly and deeply creepy?

## Playing the Percentages

In June 1996, Louis Harris published a poll showing that 57 percent of Americans support federal funding for the arts. Despite the fact that the poll is a year old and does not measure attitudes toward the National Endowment for the Arts, the 57 percent figure has popped up repeatedly in news stories about the NEA in recent months. *USA Today* ran an item on March 26 that read, "Public support for federal arts funding remains strong—57 percent and higher—according to the NEA." Alec Baldwin quoted the poll in his May 13 appearance before Congress to prove that elected officials are systematically ignoring the "majority." Congresswoman Louise Slaughter regurgitated the number in her July testimony before a congressional committee.

On June 28, a *Washington Post* editorial concluded, from the same old Harris poll, that the NEA has a 57 percent approval rating. The *Post* might consider that just because the NEA faxed the figure to supporters does not make it reflect *the agency's* approval rating. So here's a fresher number for you. In March 1997, The Polling Company reported that 57 percent of Americans—yes, the same number as in the Harris poll—agree that "Congress should stop funding the NEA with taxpayer dollars and instead leave funding decisions with state government and private groups."

This is not just a case of picking the 57 percent figure you like. The anti-NEA number tracks more honestly with overall public attitudes toward government spending this decade. Even Alec Baldwin should know this.

## Streisand American Princess

Barbra Streisand, spokesperson for the oppressed, now wants to campaign on behalf of the most maligned, most mistreated, most outrageously defamed sub-population in these United States. We're talking, of course, about Jewish women. "As a Jewish woman," says Streisand, "I have always been bothered by negative stereotypes about us, and in my films I have always tried to show Jewish women in a positive light." Oh? In *The Mirror Has Two Faces*, the movie she directed and starred in last year, Streisand showed herself in a positive light—but Lauren Bacall and Mimi Rogers, who played her mother and sister, came across as the JAPpiest of Jewish American princesses. Meanwhile, on her concert tour, she occasionally appeared on stage with the comedian Mike Myers, dressed in drag to play his outrageously stereotypical middle-aged JAP character, Linda Richman.

Streisand is pronouncing on Jewish womanhood in her capacity as honorary chair of Brandeis University's new International Research Institute on Jewish Women, funded by the Jewish women's organization Hadassah. Says the institute's director, Shulamit Reinharz, "After 2,000 years of nearly total exclusion from the prestigious processes of learning and creating knowledge, Jewish women are ready to take their place at the table."

Somehow this feels like a comedown from the work of Hadassah founder Henrietta Szold—promoting the creation of a Jewish state, educating immigrants, and finding



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# Casual

## Keeping Cool

There are no un-air-conditioned social classes anymore. Last Wednesday, on a night of 98-degree heat, I picked up a six-pack of beer—Old Gumption Limited Edition Woodchuck Valley Pale Ale, or something. The guy at the counter said dimly, "Mmm-*mm*, that's nice and cold."

"And a good thing, too," I said. "My wife's in agony."

"What's the matter?"

"Just the heat. We don't have air conditioning."

I thought this would endear me to him. The fellow clearly didn't belong to the air-conditioned classes himself. (He didn't belong to orthodontia-, deodorant-, or mouthwash-using classes, either.)

Instead, he said, "*Don't have air conditioning?* You nuts? You live in the Dark Ages or something?"

An oafish 20-year-old stockboy looked up wide-eyed from where he was stacking boxes in the corner. "Geeeeez," he said. "You have kids?"

When I told him yes, he gave a crisp *Tsk!* and a slight nod, like a small-town scold in the presence of a moral menace.

As I drove home, I looked at the houses in my neighborhood: Every last one of them, except ours, had its windows closed, the kind of Plexiglas windows that seal shut with a loud *thlirp!* and let no air in or out. All of these houses emitted the jiggly hum of air-conditioned contentment.

Where I grew up, in a coastal town north of Boston, to have air conditioning was an unequivocal embarrassment. It marked you as *nouveau riche*, or idle, or both. If you had it, it meant that you lived in one of the breezeless neighborhoods far from the oceanfront, or that you were so bereft of inner resources that you preferred to sit at home contemplating your appliances. It seemed to stunt people emotionally, too: Kids with air-conditioning were weird, antisocial types who spent beautiful beach days in the thrumming cold of a dark basement rec room, communing with their televisions.

Now that's the way the whole country is. How could it be otherwise? Tens of millions of people live in places like Phoenix and Houston and Bakersfield and Orlando, which are virtually uninhabitable without air conditioning. It doesn't matter if you're rich or poor: Once you're traveling to an air-conditioned office or factory in your air-conditioned car, an un-air-conditioned family life is unbearable. This creates an intolerance of meteorological variation that has spread to the entire country. When you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail. When you have an air conditioner, 73 degrees looks like heat stroke. The un-air-conditioned life is not worth living.

Midway through last week's heat wave, the papers did their what-people-are-doing-to-beat-the-heat stories. This is an annual staple that always obeys certain genre rules: twelve horrifying vignettes—the immigrant family of eight that lives in the boiler room, the senior citizen who lives above the dump next to the fish market—accompanied by a half-page photo of a group of black children guffawing in front of an open hydrant in Brooklyn. But this year's stories were different. More often than not, "Dolores Fuertes de la Variga, 19, a mother of two . . . ," or whoever, turned out to be taking the air not out of indigence, but because her "unit" was broken and the repairman wouldn't get there until later in the afternoon.

In the hot months, public places used to come alive with people strolling around to cool down or show off their summer dresses. Now everyone just stays inside. Sometime in the past decade, we passed a tipping point: Since there's no one on the street, one's choice is no longer between the lonely comfort of climate control and the pre-air-conditioning jollity of the public square. It's between the lonely comfort of climate control and the lonely agony of being stuck in the heat all by yourself.

Much as Robert Frost said about the Atlantic in his poem "Does No One at All Ever Feel This Way in the Least?"—

> *And now, O sea, you're lost by aeroplane.*
> *Our sailors ride a bullet for a boat.*
> *Our coverage of distance is so facile*
> *It makes us to have had a sea in vain.*

—now the weather is lost by Carrier and Hotpoint. Every place in the country is the same place, winter and summer. In Los Angeles and Phoenix, outdoor restaurants are air-conditioned and misted. Some of the country's colder cities—like Minneapolis and Des Moines—have even glassed in huge parts of their downtowns, so you can drive to work in your pajamas in January if you want. This does not stop people from fraudulent bragging about their regional identities, as if any place in the United States still had weather: Minnesotans about their resistance to cold, New Englanders about their seafaring ruggedness, Arizonans about their "desert souls"—whatever those are. But for now, it's 68 degrees on Main Street (which is in a mall), it's 68 degrees at the ballpark (which is domed), and at the beach, it's—

But why go to the beach? It's too darn hot.

Christopher Caldwell



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## Recession-Proof Economy

Bravo to Irwin M. Stelzer ("Whatever Happened to the Business Cycle?," July 14) for giving partial credit for our current good economic times to Mike Milken. To my venture capitalist friends in Silicon Valley, Milken is a hero. As Stelzer points out, it was Milken who freed up billions in monetary and human capital that migrated from low-tech, low-growth companies to high-tech, high-growth industries. Thus he helped transform Nasdaq into the world's hottest stock market and had a hand in creating millions and millions of new American jobs. Yet the media elite, unable or unwilling to see the bigger economic picture, continue to pillory Milken. Thoughtful historians, I predict, will ultimately give Mike Milken as much or more credit for creating the New American Economy as Ronald Reagan, Bill Gates, or Alan Greenspan.

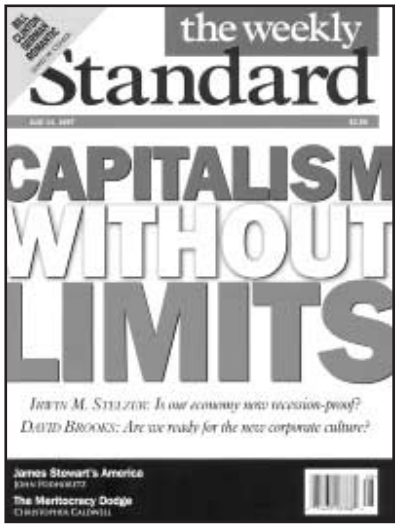
Marc Beauchamp
Falls Church, VA

Irwin Stelzer properly praises the private sector and market forces for the strength and duration of the current economic recovery. He also astutely observes that economic theory says little about cause and effect relationships in our complicated economy, which is perhaps why he fell into the trap that so many do—heaping unwarranted praise on Alan Greenspan.

The economy is doing as well as it is precisely because "a highly competitive market" controls long-term interest rates, not because of Greenspan's signaling of short-term rates. Not only are the financial markets raising and lowering long-term rates sufficiently to hold credit growth in line with the economy's capacity to grow, but the markets also have become increasingly successful in neutralizing Greenspan's periodic rate-signaling errors.

While Greenspan deserves full credit for dumping the economy into the last recession, whose onset he overlooked for five months, the financial markets held long-term rates high enough in 1992 and 1993 to prevent an outbreak of inflation as he snookered the markets into accepting excessively low short-term rates. In effect, the markets saved Greenspan from himself, something he lacks the intellectual honesty to admit; had the markets not done so, we would have experienced a repeat of the Fed-induced inflation of the late '60s and '70s.

Unfortunately, we have to depend upon market-determined long-term rates to hold inflation at bay because short-term rates are not responding fully or immediately to inflation shocks, as they should. This unresponsiveness has been caused by the




widely held but mistaken belief that the Fed can and should peg or "smooth" short-term rates.

The Fed pegs short-term rates because it can set just one rate, which is its target for the rate at which banks lend money to each other on an overnight basis. The Fed, however, is so impotent as a market mover that this overnight rate, called the Fed Funds rate, bounces wildly on a daily basis. Unfortunately, an insufficient understanding by economists and others as to how the Fed Funds market works helps to perpetuate the fiction that Greenspan actually can set short-term rates.

Worse, though, the Fed pegs the very thing that should not be pegged, for it is short-term interest rates, not long-term rates, which should respond more dramatically to economic news. Fortunately, but almost without understanding why, borrowers and lenders of long-term capital now provide that response, but do so by moving longer-term rates in an exaggerated manner, which whipsaws those sectors of the economy most sensitive to interest-rate fluctuations. Little wonder, then, that economic growth varies so much from quarter to quarter.

Stelzer correctly observes that economic theory falls short in explaining economic cause and effect; nowhere is this more true than in the monetary arena. With any luck, though, theory will soon advance to the point that the markets will begin to understand why it is in everyone's interest to ignore Greenspan's often erroneous interest-rate signals and instead set all interest rates. At that time, Greenspan and the Fed will fade into their richly deserved obscurity.

Bert Ely
Alexandria, VA

## Beyond Parody

I enjoyed, but was a bit disappointed by, your parody of my *News-Hour* essays (July 14). It should have been better. May I offer a few notes for your parodist, who I assume is young and new to the form? First, don't let seriousness obstruct your mimicry. Seriousness is for satirists; keep it light. Second, don't get personal; readers will think less of you and dismiss the criticism. Third, if your thesis is that your target's work is unmemorable, don't write a parody of it. It shows that you remember it. Fourth, be funny, whenever possible. That said, here's how you might have imagined my handling of the Tyson-Holyfield match.

"Call that a fight? Of course, you call that a fight. What is a fight, if not a bite? A smack, a snack? To be sure, apologists will insist that the bite was an aberration, something accidental, more acci than dental—a deviation from the Marquis de Q's rules of the game. But as Keats wrote (or was it Shelley Winters, or Shelley



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Berman): "In for a fight, in for a bite." No, this was boxing, all right—the beastly bestial contest of beast attempting to best beast. Is this what the American frontier has come to after 300 years? Begin with bison and end with Tyson? Oh, the urbanity!"

There you go.

ROGER ROSENBLATT
NEW YORK, NY

## CLOSE TO ABSOLUTE GOOD

Somebody introduce David Brooks ("The Cosmic Capitalists," July 14) to the real world. Cosmic capitalists are the next big threat? Aside from some New Age hokum and Dilbert-able fad-think, true CosCaps do pretty close to absolute good. Get an idea, start a company, have an IPO, get cash, get bored—repeat. That Brooks finds the Fast Company ethos bizarre really tells you just how out of touch the Beltway chattering class is with real creative energy.

VIRGINIA POSTREL
WASHINGTON, DC

## THE FOOTBALL TYRANNY

David Tell's description of the sad state of affairs in collegiate athletics under Title IX is welcome if incomplete ("Playing Unfair," July 7). The federal law views each athlete as equal. Of course colleges do not. Thus, football's many male bodies and considerable budgets force athletic directors to add women's sports or cut men's sports. As a former collegiate athlete and coach I can testify to the virtues of participation and the ideals that sports encourage. It is clear that the better choice is to add women's sports. But many regions of the country lack the competitive base for creating women's teams in say field hockey or rowing. Title IX, like most federal programs, naively mandates a top down solution destined to frustrate everyone while largely undermining the spirit of the law upon which it is based.

Tell is too easy on the football tyranny, which should and could give more than it has. Is it really necessary for a team that puts 11 players on a field at one time to carry 100-plus players on the roster? The free-market-driven need to build marquee sports, and the hidden reality that football teams serve as the vehicles for many minority students to attend highly ranked schools, combine to drive other sports from the map. The "business" (and politics) of college athletics, and of football in particular, is as much to blame for the dismal state of affairs as are the zealots at the Department of Education.

JOSEPH R. CINCOTTA
MILWAUKEE, WI

## WATCH OUT FOR SOUTER

Regarding "Suicidal Jurisprudence" (July 14): Justice Souter opines that the majority of Americans do not have the right to defend themselves against a minority viewpoint, one which has proven itself to be detrimental to the common good. This perspective of the "common good" is established within the historical body of American medical and judicial precedent. The results in those cultures that have chosen to sacrifice prudent judgment for the expedient pacification of some vociferous minority, or some erroneous notion of "enlightenment," may be confirmed upon an examination of the Netherlands.

Justice Souter exemplifies judicial tyranny. In his "ominous muttering," Souter states that he alone will determine our culture's fate, and that "reasonable legislative consideration" by the states shall effect no protection from his implied and overriding veto of the people's will. Apparently, those explicit limitations upon federal power, which are enumerated within the Constitution, do not dissuade Souter from imposing his subjective rule over that sovereign aspect embodied within the Congress. A representative republic has little meaning if one man can subjugate an entire nation to his misguided philosophy: "To act regardless of the institutional preferability of the political branches as forms for addressing constitutional claims."

This utterance of Justice Souter violates Article I of the U.S. Constitution. It is a direct challenge to the constitutionally authorized power to legislate, which is vested in the Congress. With this statement, Souter has also demonstrated his willingness to arrogate "due process of law" as stipulated within the Fifth Amendment of the Constitution. By such a proclamation, Justice Souter denies the co-sovereignty of the legislative branch of our government, and is attempting to subvert its function.

BRUCE C.A. DESAUTELS
WESTFIELD, MA

## DIGITAL SYSTEMS FIGHT BIAS

There is a severe media political imbalance in America today, nowhere more so than in Washington, D.C. (Vincent Carroll, "Same Old Slant," June 30).

There is hope, however. With the advent of new technologies (such as the digital television systems and satellite transmissions) there is a slim opportunity to correct the left-leaning bias. We at Public Advocate think that refitting the nation's entertainment communications for digital systems gives Congress a chance to review the Federal Communications Commission's imbecility in turning Christian America's airwaves into Soho and Greenwich Village.

EUGENE DELGAUDIO
FALLS CHURCH, VA

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# NEWTERED

Late last month, following House passage of the central and most contentious element in Washington's pending budget deal, Newt Gingrich was euphoric. He'd been having a rough time of it, given all those persistent stories about bitter discontent among backbench Republicans. Now, with progress toward tax cuts to brag about, Gingrich thought he might finally be out of the woods. His aides went around Capitol Hill handing out brightly colored smiley-face stickers to all takers—"to show how happy we are." Then Congress went home for the July 4 recess.

Two weeks later, the smiley faces have all turned sour. Washington is all abuzz over the House Republicans' aborted coup against their speaker. Why did the anti-Newt plot fail? Not because Hill Republicans love the man. It's been clear for at least a month that they would oust him in an eyeblink if they could figure out a way to do it cleanly. No, it seems the GOP pulled back from regicide . . . well, ostensibly to protect the budget deal. As one House Republican explained it to the *New York Times*, they decided at the last moment that bringing down the speaker might "jeopardize the tax cuts and balanced budget," which would be even more frightening than keeping Gingrich in his chair. Gingrich is a big problem, in other words, but Republicans still generally think that a popular budget deal will help mitigate that problem. Just as Gingrich himself still thinks that the budget deal will help save his job—and improve his abysmally low public standing.

Dream on. The budget deal's no big deal. And Newt appears beyond salvage.

There are conservative supply-siders who want to scrap the entire emerging budget and start from scratch. The tax cuts involved, the capital-gains rate reduction in particular, strike them as insultingly small. Steve Forbes, for instance, wants a cap-gains rate of zero and thinks the existing top rate of 28 percent is a travesty—a "get lost" message to "the budding Bill Gateses and Andy Groves of the world." That top rate is too high, no question. It seems likely to come down a bit this year. But let's face it: Few Republicans are currently willing to set themselves on fire for a radical cut in capital gains. After all, the actual Bill Gateses and Andy Groves of the world somehow managed to become billionaires under the existing cap-gains regime. For the moment, at least, the rest of us may have to muddle through as well.

THE BUDGET DEAL WILL NOT SAVE REPUBLICANS FROM THEIR GINGRICH TROUBLE; NOR WILL IT SAVE GINGRICH FROM HIMSELF.

In another conservative corner, there are spending hawks outraged that the budget deal takes a powder on the government's domestic programs. They're right, of course. The bipartisan agreement reached two months ago approves only modest structural reforms of entitlements like Medicare, and instead saves money for that program primarily by squeezing its payment schedules.

It's a band-aid cure, and before anyone knows it, the band-aid is bound to fall off. Worse, the budget deal endorses five years of above-inflation growth in so-called discretionary spending. The federal administrative behemoth will expand, a result that contradicts everything the Republican party and conservatism are supposed to embody. It was on precisely that basis that THE WEEKLY STANDARD opposed the deal when it was first announced in May. And if the deal should eventually fall apart, it'll be okay by us.

But that possibility looks increasingly remote, and advising the GOP to abandon the deal looks like an increasingly impractical project. We do so advise—but we're not holding our breath. The Republicans are hell-bent on their "historic" budget goal, and chances are they'll get it.

The only significant partisan issue that remains, so



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far as we can tell, is taxes. On June 27, White House spokesman Mike McCurry said Clinton would "veto legislation that blows a hole in the deficit." The president himself has been careful to demur on this question. "I don't want to start talking about veto now," he says. But Treasury secretary Robert Rubin has sent Congress a ridiculously long letter outlining dozens of complaints about the House and Senate tax bills. The president is "deeply concerned" about any number of "unacceptable" provisions, Rubin reports, and Clinton will have "major objections" if those provisions are not repaired to his satisfaction.

The coolest Republican heads on Capitol Hill want to delay final tax action this year until after they've got a bill the president has promised to sign. If hotter Republican heads prevail, however, we bet Clinton does veto the tax bill—just once, for show. We bet he then spends a couple of weeks brutalizing the GOP for being too solicitous of the "very wealthy." We bet Clinton next turns around and signs an only slightly altered tax bill into law, having faked the Democratic party's class-conscious activists into believing he's determinedly on their side. We bet Clinton will claim—and receive—the bulk of public credit for fashioning a "truly middle-class tax cut." And we fear there's little the Republican party might do to forestall such unpleasantness. Gingrich now promises that he will withhold the spending bills necessary to fund basic federal operations until the president signs a tax bill Republicans want. Oh, good: another government shutdown. It'll never happen.

Truth be told, the tax bill is already perfectly "middle-class," and it is nothing to sniff at. But it's not all it's advertised to be, either. The most important bit of relief, a $500 per-child credit, may not be available to most families earning less than $25,000 a year. The "earned-income tax credit" those families already receive erases their federal income tax liability, and some House Republicans do not want to reimburse them for Social Security and Medicare payroll taxes. That would be "welfare," House Ways and Means committee chairman Bill Archer insists. Senate Republicans and the White House disagree, and Archer may yet have to give way.

But there is a similar problem with the per-child credit further up the income scale. It's a problem so complicated that only a single newspaper, the *Wall Street Journal*, has noticed it. In simplified form, the problem works as follows. A relatively small but by no means atypical class of taxpayers is involved, in families comprising maybe 2 million children. If you are a married couple with three or more children (or a single parent with two or more children), and you have child-care expenses but no itemized deductions, the new child tax credit may well force you to file an "alternative minimum tax" return. The "AMT" is a sinister part of the federal code that establishes an income-adjusted floor on tax liability. Any part of the child credit that would cut a family's taxes below this floor will thus be disallowed.

So if Bill Archer does get his way on the earned-income tax credit, our hypothetical family of five will not get the child credit until it earns at least $25,000. Then, as that family moves up the income ladder and owes more income tax, it will get increasingly more of the credit. But as it moves up higher still, the alternative minimum tax will begin to *reduce* that family's child credit. By about $63,000 of family income—roughly the national median for married filers with three or more children—the child credit will be worth only about 60 percent of its face value. Above this income level, in the next-highest tax bracket, the child credit will then be slowly and perversely increased, until you reach $110,000 in annual income.

This weird, unfair, give-and-take effect appears inevitable as long as the AMT isn't changed. And no one's talking about changing it. Inflation will make its bite more severe over time, sucking more and more families, over a greater spread of incomes, into the maw. And, weirdest of all, the AMT will hurt worse the more children you have. For some people, it turns out, the child tax credit has a child tax *penalty* built right in.

For everyone else, the child credit is probably better than nothing. But it's much too slapdash to merit praise as "tax reform."

How did Republicans come to this pass, a situation that's bound to hurt them short-term, and probably won't much benefit them in the future? Two words: Newt Gingrich. The Republican party in Congress, alas, now stands for almost nothing if it doesn't stand for a budget deal. That is Gingrich's doing more than anyone else's.

In 1995, the speaker made a fetish of balancing the budget in the year 2002. In his messianic way, convinced that he might govern America from the House of Representatives, like Henry Clay in 1812, he managed to impose that fetish on his entire party. Republicans no longer need a deal to balance the budget in 2002; given the economy, it would probably be balanced *without* a deal sometime late next year. But that doesn't matter to the current GOP. The fetish of 2002 remains everything. Having failed to secure it by *force majeure* in 1995, Gingrich and the rest of them are doubly determined to deal it into existence in 1997.

So pointless. The budget deal will not save Republicans from their obligation to stand for something. It will not save them from their Gingrich trouble. It will not save Newt Gingrich from himself.

*—David Tell, for the Editors*



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# Gay Rites

**by Tucker Carlson**

*Philadelphia*

THE SERVICE FOR GAY EPISCOPALIANS and their supporters held at the Church of St. Luke and the Epiphany in downtown Philadelphia last week could have been a reenactment of a civil-rights rally from 35 years ago, and in some sense it was. Sweating parishioners fanned themselves with programs as the preacher, Rev. Elizabeth Kaeton, gazed heavenward and broke into a stirring a capella spiritual about the struggle for freedom of an oppressed people. "Stand together in solidarity one with the other," commanded Kaeton, and a forest of clasped hands rose in response above the pews. For a moment it seemed like Montgomery, 1961.

It was meant to, of course. At the Episcopal church's triennial General Convention in the City of Brotherly Love, the church's leading gay theologians and most visible gay clergy gathered to argue that gay liberation—eliminating any remaining religious taboos against homosexuality—is the spiritual heir to the civil-rights movement. The task, they claim, is as morally significant as defeating segregation, as God-inspired as the Exodus.

Kaeton, a lesbian priest from Newark, began her sermon by explaining how, because of bigotry and homophobia, gay people in the Episcopal church have for centuries "had our identity as children of God reduced to a single sex act." That said, she went on to reduce the entire Christian experience to a single sex act, or at best several. "The pathway to our spiritual selves is through our erotic selves," Kaeton announced with gravity. "The erotic is the nurturer or nursemaid of all our deepest understanding." It is, therefore, the task of gay Episcopalians "to reclaim sensuality in our liturgy," to "help ourselves and the church to reclaim the erotic as a special part of our spiritual lives." How to fulfill the God-given duty to become "our best erotic selves"? Kaeton recommended beginning "with awkward strokes to touch the strength of our erotic power." For, "when we step into and embrace our erotic selves, we have touched our deepest spirituality."

It's not clear exactly what any of this means, much less what it has to do with Christianity. But Kaeton didn't bother to explain herself further. She didn't have to. "This is ancient wisdom," she proclaimed, and just about everyone in the room, including Presiding Bishop Edmund Browning, the outgoing head of the Episcopal church, seemed to nod in profound agreement. Later that night, in the bar at the Marriott near the convention center, two mustachioed priests, each festooned with pink triangle pins, red AIDS ribbons, and gay pride rainbows, sat drinking scotch and mulling over the highlights of the sermon. The bartender, a woman about 30 with a thick Philadelphia accent, looked on in confusion. "I grew up in the Episcopal church," she said in a conspiratorial whisper, "but I don't remember anything like this."

A lot of people don't, but then a lot of people don't go to the church's main convention every three years, where Episcopal doctrine is hammered out and voted on. The most contentious topic under discussion this year is gay marriage. A number of proposed resolutions would add a new rite to the Episcopal liturgy, allowing priests to conduct wedding-like blessings of "committed same-sex unions" with the official sanction of the national church. It seems unlikely the resolutions will pass, at least this year. But that may not matter much; many priests already conduct such services and simply invent the liturgy themselves.

But the resolutions did provoke a vigorous debate and hours of testimony. Virtually all of the gay Episcopalians who spoke in favor of the new rite came off as sincere. Many spoke poignantly of their tortured relationships with the church. It was hard not to be moved by much of their testimony, and even some of those who had come to argue against the gay proposals said later that they had been. But it was equally hard not to notice that the gay movement within the Episcopal church has not thought particularly hard about its own positions.

Consider Rt. Rev. Otis Charles, the Rosa Parks of the Episcopal gay liberation movement. In 1993, after serving as both the bishop of Utah and the head of an Episcopal seminary in Boston, Charles, a married father of five, publicly declared his homosexuality. Though he was close to 70 at the time, Charles left his wife of 42 years, renounced the straight world and moved to San Francisco to become a gay activist. At the General Assembly, Charles is a bona fide celebrity. He is also utterly inarticulate about the specifics of the proposed gay blessings, for which he testified last week. What, for instance, does it mean for homosexuals to enter into a "faithful, committed relationship," of the kind the church may soon sanction? Charles readily admits he doesn't know. "Does faithfulness mean monogamy?" he asks rhetorically. It may sound like an academic debate, but these are the sorts of questions—Should homosexuals be held to the same moral standards as heterosexuals? Does God sanction promiscuous gay sex?—whose answers can tear a church in two. And may someday soon tear apart the Episcopal church.

Charles seems unconcerned. "We need to develop an ethical sensibility that comes out of the gay sensi-



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bility," he says firmly, as if this settles the question. I'm still trying to unravel exactly what he's talking about—though it's becoming clear that he doesn't think monogamy has much to do with faithfulness—when a much younger priest named Chip Barker enters the conversation to help clarify things.

Not long ago, says Barker, who is also gay and from San Francisco, a homosexual couple came to him to talk about having their relationship blessed. Barker himself is in a committed relationship (which he says he expects to "last for the rest of our lives, unless something happens"), so he says he could tell right away that this was "a deeply committed couple," together a long time, and happy. Over the course of conversation, however, Barker says it emerged that the two men weren't in the union alone. There was a third man whom they both regularly had sex with. He'd been in the picture for seven years. The whole arrangement, Barker admits cheerfully, is a little confusing, but, well, "the conversation is just beginning." Or ending.

*Tucker Carlson is a staff writer for* THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

# HERE ARE SOME QUOTAS TO KILL

**by Terry Pell**

REPUBLICANS DO BEST IN THE DEBATE over racial preferences when they spotlight the least defensible aspects of the civil-rights industry—not its lofty intentions but the grubby reality of race politics. Thus, the defenders of affirmative action fell silent at a House hearing last month when a witness recounted his treatment by a Federal Communications Commission administrative law judge. One J. Thomas Lamprecht read from the judge's decision informing him that he would not be granted a radio license because he suffered from the "birth defect" of being born a "white Anglo-Saxon male."

Such everyday outrages are the predictable result of policies that Republicans should be fighting to eliminate. As it turns out, they have an opportunity at hand. The gigantic 1991 Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA, known as "Ice-Tea") must be reauthorized by September 30 in order for billions in federal highway funds to flow to the states over the next six years. ISTEA contains a huge racial set-aside (and a few minor ones) that Congress could do away with now, while continuing to debate a broader rollback of affirmative action.

By taking a stand on the racial provisions of ISTEA, Republicans could call President Clinton's bluff about "mending" affirmative action. In his famous July 1995 speech, the president said affirmative action "does not mean numerical quotas." Yet the biggest racial set-aside in ISTEA is a flat requirement that "not less than 10 percent" of highway funds go to minority-owned businesses. Congress could not ask for a clearer instance of the type of quota the president said he opposes.

In order to meet this quota, federal transportation agencies and states employ a host of set-asides and bid preferences. In some cases, states offer a financial incentive or "bounty" to prime contractors who pass over low-bidding subcontractors in favor of firms owned by listed racial minorities (including Aleuts, Samoans, and Bhutanese—against whom there is scant evidence of discrimination in the highway industry). This bounty is paid automatically, regardless of the prime contractor's costs in hiring minority-owned subcontractors.

In practice, the 10 percent set-aside has been both expensive and unfair. Far from benefiting "socially and economically disadvantaged individuals" as Congress envisioned, the set-aside has come to benefit a handful of wealthy minority business owners. With the federal government as their silent partner, these firms are able to get federal highway contracts time after time even though they are neither economically nor socially disadvantaged and regardless of whether they are the low bidder on the contract.

Applying the 1995 Supreme Court decision in *Adarand Constructors, Inc.* v. *Peña*, last month a federal district court declared unconstitutional ISTEA's rigid presumption that all members of listed minority groups—and no members of any other group—have suffered economic or social disadvantage. Other courts have been troubled by ISTEA's postulate that in the absence of such disadvantage, minority groups would "naturally" come to occupy 10 percent of all highway contracting. Congress can hardly complain about Clinton bureaucrats who refuse to abide by federal court decisions if it merrily reauthorizes racial preferences the courts already have ruled unconstitutional.

Nor are the infirmities of ISTEA's set-aside repaired by Attorney General Janet Reno's recent effort to "mend" racial preferences in government



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contracting. The guidelines her department issued in response to *Adarand* apply only to the federal government's own direct procurement. They do, however, require some showing of statistical disparity. If Congress reenacts ISTEA unchanged, it will reauthorize a set-aside requirement even cruder than what is now acceptable to Clinton's own Justice Department.

Two years ago, Congress ended a similarly egregious set-aside, an FCC broadcasting preference that benefited a handful of wealthy broadcast-station owners. One beneficiary, for example, was Viacom, which used the preference to escape $600 million in taxes by selling its cable TV properties to a black entrepreneur. The entrepreneur in question was largely financed by the nation's largest cable operator, making him hardly economically or socially disadvantaged or even the sole beneficiary of the preference. To this day, the elimination of this FCC program has been the only tangible Republican victory in the effort to do away with federal racial preferences.

The ISTEA set-aside is no less a quota than the FCC's now-defunct racial preference, and it is no less a handout to the wealthy. Congress ought to act decisively to end it.

***Terry Pell is senior counsel at the Center for Individual Rights, which represented J. Thomas Lamprecht in his challenge of FCC preferences.***

# For a Doolittle Congress

**by Major Garrett**

For many years, conservatives have hesitated to denounce the assaults on the First Amendment that go under the name of "campaign-finance reform." At the same time, they have not offered the public an adequate alternative to the Left's repeated attempts to limit political speech. Now they have their chance.

Rep. John Doolittle, Republican of California, has proposed legislation that would end all limits on political contributions and require swift electronic disclosure of all money raised by candidates for federal office. (Donations from foreign sources would remain illegal.) Doolittle would scrap the existing system of contribution limits, filing requirements, and obtuse distinctions between "soft money" and "hard money." And the Federal Election Commission—instead of monitoring Byzantine rules that politicians routinely flout and meting out puny penalties years after the fact—would actually do something useful: supply voters with information about the flow of money to their representative and senators before they cast their votes.

Kent Lemon

**John Doolittle**

"For too long," Doolittle says, "the debate on campaign-finance reform has been between the far Left and the Left. I don't want to participate in a debate between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. This is the first truly conservative approach to campaign-finance reform." Fifty-four lawmakers have cosponsored Doolittle's bill, among them GOP leaders Tom DeLay, Bill Paxon, and Gerald Solomon. But the bill has received zero media attention.

Most reporters remain infatuated with the monstrous McCain-Feingold bill, which would impose "voluntary" spending limits, eliminate soft-money contributions to political parties, require free TV and radio time for campaign spots, and provide free campaign mailers. All you need to know about this silly bill is that candidates who did not submit to its "voluntary" spending limits would have to include a disclaimer to that effect on all campaign commercials and mail (like the surgeon general's warning). In other words, if a candidate decided to spend more money on a campaign than McCain-Feingold deemed appropriate, he would be required to affix a political scarlet letter to every commercial he made and every piece of mail he sent out.

The president has chosen McCain-Feingold as his legislative fig leaf, but not many others have. Yet the bill has nevertheless enjoyed the kind of slavering media coverage typically reserved for proposals to raise the minimum wage or to nationalize health care. And with congressional hearings into last year's campaign-



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finance shenanigans now underway, calls have again risen for "reform" along the McCain-Feingold model. At a minimum, lawmakers might seek an easy way out by calling for a ban on soft-money contributions and forcing broadcasters to provide free air time for political commercials. (The FEC created soft money to help political parties maintain their viability in an age when candidates increasingly operated as autonomous political corporations.)

Sen. Mitch McConnell—a Kentucky Republican who is a veteran of the campaign-finance wars and opposes all new regulations—fears that a majority of senators might back a ban on soft money just to appear to have "done something." "It's premature to say we have dodged a bullet," McConnell says. "McCain-Feingold is not going to become law this year, but the 'reformers' are going to make a run at us sometime this year." So what will the alternative be?

Ellen Miller, executive director of Public Campaign, a group that will soon propose legislation to require taxpayer funding for federal campaigns, believes that McCain-Feingold has no political future and that it's time for a national debate on taxpayer-financed campaigns. A simple ban on soft money would be insufficient, she says.

Conservatives should relish such a debate, especially when they can point to the Doolittle bill as the wiser approach. McConnell says that public financing of federal campaigns "doesn't have a snowball's chance" of passing. Neither, he would hasten to add, does the Doolittle bill. At least not now.

That may be because so few voters know about it. Doolittle imagines a world where data on campaign contributions are posted regularly on the Internet, where software companies sell programs that allow people to discern patterns in political giving, and where campaigns use juicy details about donations to their opponents in direct-mail flyers.

A world of unlimited contributions and full disclosure would allow money to flow in full public view, something Americans have never seen before. Miller, of Public Campaign, says the Doolittle bill would "only tell us where the money comes from" and not what benefits contributors may have received in exchange. She also worries that allowing unlimited contributions would give even more power to the wealthiest corporations and best-funded political action committees. "You'd have the senator from Exxon, the senator from Archer Daniels Midland, the senator from the National Abortion Rights Action League," Miller says. "American voters would see this as campaign-finance 'deform.' It would simply open the money spigot."

Maybe, maybe not. Suppose for a moment that Miller is right and that certain candidates would attract only certain kinds of money. Let's say, for example, that a Louisiana senator attracts hundreds of thousands of dollars from oil and gas interests, but devotes no time to soliciting contributions from hundreds of other policy pleaders. If this senator were free from all the other special interests in Washington, might he not feel freer to defy those interests more often than he would under the current rules? In other words, might the "senator from Exxon" represent the people of Louisiana more independently than the Louisiana senator who is now the "senator from a thousand special-interest groups?"

"This goes to the heart of what we are as Americans," says Doolittle. "People should be allowed to decide this question for themselves." And conservatives should recognize that they may now have a bill that can, at long last, put them on the right side of reform.

***Major Garrett, a Washington reporter, last wrote for* THE WEEKLY STANDARD *about school choice in Minnesota.***

# WHO'S ENDANGERED NOW?

**by Angela Antonelli**

CLAIRE ROYAL, MARIAN ANDERSON, and Bill Nakagawa of Arboga, California—a retired elementary-school teacher, a grandmother married to the local levee manager, and a veteran of World War II—lived very different lives and probably would never have been mentioned together had the three of them not been killed in the same disaster. On January 2, 1997, a levee burst, and flood waters destroyed their town. When officials finally took stock, they found that the flood not only had ended these lives but also had forced over 32,000 people from their homes and covered 25,000 square miles, wrecking property and wildlife habitat and drowning over 600 head of livestock.

And the tragedy had a further disturbing twist. Since 1990, federal officials had known that a flood would wreak such havoc in Arboga and had urged that the levee receive immediate attention. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had reported, "Loss of life is



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expected under existing conditions, without remedial repairs, for major flood events." Other officials, however, with other priorities, blocked repairs while the danger grew.

Unfortunately for the residents of Arboga, the levee was home to 37 elderberry bushes, and the elderberry has been known to shelter the threatened North Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle. Although nobody had actually seen a North Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle in the area, local officials were required to spend six years on studies that cost over $10 million and delayed flood protection. When, at last, permission was granted to begin repairs in the summer of 1997, it was too late.

Arboga's experience is not unique. Between 1995 and 1997, more than a dozen officials from flood-prone areas in six states told the House Resources Committee, work on levees and flood-mitigation in their communities had been stopped because a threatened or endangered species was in the vicinity. Communities caught in this bind, moreover, have no recourse. The law allows the president to suspend the Endangered Species Act only *after* a disaster has occurred.

Largely in response to the Arboga tragedy, two House Republicans from California, Richard Pombo and Wally Herger, introduced the Flood Prevention and Family Protection Act (H.R. 478) in January. This measure would exempt state and local officials from "federal consultation and conferencing" requirements under the Endangered Species Act when they faced a "critical, imminent threat to public health or safety." This would allow communities to move expeditiously to reconstruct, operate, maintain, or repair flood-control facilities in order "to protect human life or to prevent the substantial risk of serious property damage."

If the Endangered Species Act pits people against wildlife, the Pombo-Herger proposal sought to reconcile their interests. It was designed to inject common sense and flexibility into the federal regulatory system. Predictably, however, the debate over the bill ignored the actual effects of the available policy options. Thus, the opponents argued as if the bill's sponsors were out to rape and pillage. In House floor debate, Democrat Sander Levin of Michigan called it a "transparent effort to gut the Endangered Species Act." George Miller, a California Democrat, said the proposal would take a "sledgehammer" to the act. As Nancy Pelosi, another California Democrat, saw it, the bill would go "to the extreme in allowing a non-emergency exemption of the act with the result of permanently decimating the intent" of the Endangered Species Act.

Opponents of Pombo-Herger assume that, but for the vigilance of federal bureaucrats, individual citizens and state and local officials would disregard the impact of their flood-control activities on endangered species. What they ignore is that *because of* the Endangered Species Act, property owners and state and local governments are afraid of finding rare plants and animals. Indeed, the act has created an incentive for landowners to make sure federal regulators will find no potentially endangered species on their property.

In the end, the opponents' chief concern was power: the power of the environmental groups and of the regulators. GOP Rep. George Radanovich of California got to the heart of the problem when he said: "Proponents of the status quo . . . are less concerned about protecting endangered species than they are [about] giving up federal control of environmental decisionmaking to local authorities." Sherwood Boehlert, the liberal New York Republican who led the opposition to Pombo-Herger, urged House members not to allow "legitimate concerns about flooding to wash away 25 years of effort to preserve endangered species." Amazingly, the opponents succeeded in characterizing as "overreaching" local officials' efforts to gain exemption from federal regulations *"where necessary to protect human life."*

House Republicans did not cover themselves with glory on this issue. The leadership made the vote on Pombo-Herger a test case for environmental reforms for the 105th Congress, but failed to educate members about the bill or to consolidate support. Consequently, on May 7 the House shunted aside the bill and instead approved an empty substitute offered by Boehlert, by a vote of 227-196. Afterwards, the leadership feigned anger at GOP moderates who had defected. In "punishment," the leaders suggested that no environmental legislation would move for the rest of the year.

This victory for the environmental movement entrenched an irrational status quo: Only after disaster has struck—after lives are lost, property is destroyed, and "protected" wildlife is wiped out—can the federal government dispense with red tape while communities rebuild. Once again, well-financed and extremist groups displayed their ability to influence the nation's environmental policies and to control the debate.

Shortly after the vote, House speaker Newt Gingrich met with the caucus of congressmen from the western states and admitted that mistakes had been made. Later, Gingrich assured Rush Limbaugh's audience that he will bring the Flood Prevention and Family Protection Act to the floor of the House again before the end of the year. As of now, however, its prospects remain grim. Apparently the House leadership is bent on playing it safe through 1998—though on environmental issues as on others, this is bad policy and bad politics.

***Angela Antonelli is deputy director for economic policy studies at the Heritage Foundation.***



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# Chaos on Capitol Hill

**By Matthew Rees**

Here's how bad things are among House Republicans: After the collapse of the coup attempt against Newt Gingrich, the speaker is being described as "utterly contemptuous" of his fellow GOP leaders Dick Armey, Tom DeLay, and John Boehner. Having forced Bill Paxon's resignation, Gingrich is eager for DeLay to step aside as well. Meanwhile, Armey and DeLay are said to have suffered an irreparable breach. The two Texans, close friends during their 12 years in the House, didn't speak or make eye contact at a lunch held by the Texas GOP delegation in the Capitol on July 17. DeLay feels he was hung out to dry by Armey—who denies any involvement in the coup attempt he was very much a part of—and tensions are exacerbated by Armey's frantic effort to get back into Gingrich's good graces. No one seems to trust the cagey Boehner.

As the fights rage, rank-and-file House Republicans also have lost faith in their leaders. It wasn't supposed to be this way. Not long into Gingrich's tenure as speaker, the conservatives who dominate House Republican ranks realized he wasn't the ideological ally they thought he was. They complained he was too solicitous of GOP moderates, too reluctant to address hot-button issues like racial preference programs, and, in negotiations with congressional Democrats and the White House, too ready to compromise without getting much in return. What reassured the conservatives was that they had ideological soulmates in the leadership slots just below Gingrich. While the speaker might say one thing and do another, the conservatives believed they could trust Armey, DeLay, Boehner, and Paxon to play straight and fight for their issues.

The key development last week, if you listen to House conservatives, was that most of these leaders were exposed as conniving, weak, inept, and dishonest. The effort to remove Gingrich as speaker was aborted, and when its details were revealed in the press, the leadership waged a sloppy—and highly misleading—campaign to persuade House Republicans the effort hadn't been what it seemed. The new distrust has almost nothing to do with the fact of an attempted coup—which many members would have welcomed—and everything to do with the leadership's botching of the coup and subsequent fudging about what had transpired.

LAST WEEK'S KEY DEVELOPMENT: MOST OF THE GOP LEADERS WERE EXPOSED AS CONNIVING, WEAK, INEPT, AND DISHONEST.

The backdrop is as follows: Armey, DeLay, Boehner, and Paxon had been meeting over the past few months in hopes of fixing the problems plaguing House Republicans. Less senior House Republicans, disgruntled by the GOP's exceedingly modest agenda, were also holding similar meetings. This second group comprised many of the usual Gingrich critics—second-term conservatives like Joe Scarborough, Steve Largent, and Tom Coburn—but also moderates like Tom Campbell and past Gingrich supporters like Sue Myrick.

These meetings assumed greater importance after Gingrich bungled the disaster-relief bill in June. No immediate shakeup was expected, but on Thursday, July 10, DeLay approached one of the GOP rebels, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, and said he and other members of the leadership hoped to introduce a resolution to remove Gingrich as speaker. DeLay wanted to know whether the rebels would support

*Matthew Rees is a staff writer for* The Weekly Standard.



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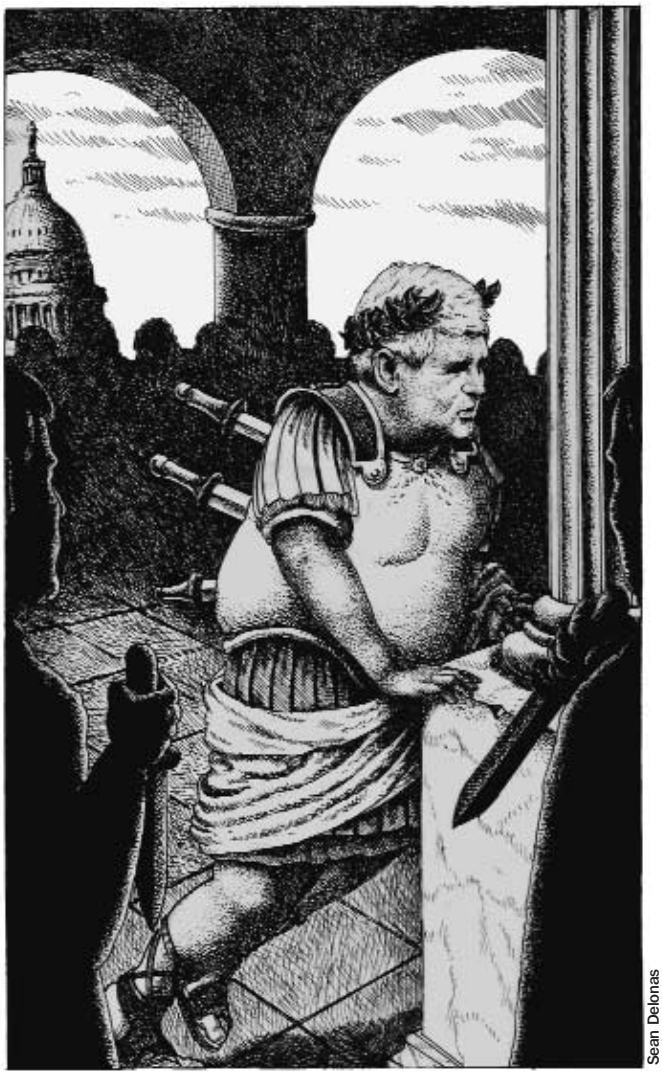
this move. A meeting was held that evening in Graham's office, where the rebels gave DeLay their support. DeLay assured them approval of Gingrich's ouster was unanimous within the leadership. Tom Campbell, a former professor at Stanford law school, was assigned to draw up the resolution to remove Gingrich, which DeLay said was needed quickly because a reporter had the story about a developing coup and would publish it the next day.

But no story appeared in the Friday papers, and at some point after the meetings broke up Thursday and before members reported to work Friday morning, the leadership retreated. The most popular (and plausible) version of the story circulating on Capitol Hill is that when Armey, who occupies the number two position in the House, was told by Boehner he would face a challenge if he sought to become speaker—and that he would probably lose—Armey removed himself from the coup effort. At this point, sources say, Armey's allegiance switched from the plotters to Gingrich, whom he alerted to the machinations. This did nothing to ingratiate Armey to the rebels, and he further infuriated them Friday morning when he derided efforts to dump the speaker as "immoral."



Sean Delonas

Leadership staffers take issue with parts of this story. They claim there was never any effort to get rid of Gingrich. The rebels, some say, misunderstood the purpose of the meetings. But even in the (unlikely) event that the leadership's version is more accurate, it doesn't matter at this point. Within a day of the coup attempt's being reported, House members of all ideological stripes had concluded that the first account of leadership betrayal—detailed by Sandy Hume in the *Hill*, a Capitol Hill weekly—was correct.

Another conclusion quickly reached was that Armey was the one who had hurt his reputation most. When the story broke on July 16, his communications director, Michele Davis, arrived at a gathering of House Republicans—meeting to select someone to fill the leadership position held by the departing Susan Molinari—and distributed a statement in which Armey asserted, "Any and all allegations that I was involved in some ridiculous plot to oust the Speaker are completely false, and, in fact, ludicrous."

This didn't sit well with those who had been part of the effort to remove Gingrich and who believed Armey's statement to be false. Near the end of the meeting, Jim Walsh, a New York moderate, rose and asked the leadership either to apologize to the speaker for having tried to oust him or to specify the inaccuracies in the *Hill*'s account. After initially declining to comment on the story, Armey said it was inaccurate. At this, Lindsey Graham exploded. The usually mild-mannered second-termer, who only recently emerged as a Gingrich critic, leaped out of his chair. He intended to go to the microphone and blast Armey for spreading lies. But before he could go anywhere he was restrained by another member sitting nearby, Richard Pombo, and Boehner quelled the eruption—Graham had knocked over his chair with a noisy clang—by announcing he had the final tally in the election to replace Molinari.



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Graham kept quiet about Armey for the rest of the week, though other House conservatives weren't so restrained. "I'd be surprised if Armey kept his position as majority leader," said one, adding that in his view Armey had become "a comical figure." Another House Republican said Armey, who had been seen as one of the few people who could stand up to Gingrich, was now revealed to be as weak as the rest of the speaker's inner circle. Others said Armey's conduct—his beginning as the coup's ringleader, then retreating from it, then telling Gingrich about their colleagues' plotting, then denying any involvement—indicated he could no longer be trusted. No member I spoke with, moderate or conservative, believed Armey's denials.

DeLay and Boehner minimized the damage to themselves by refusing to mount an Armey-style campaign to refute the coup story. Yet they too took hits from their colleagues last week. The main criticism of DeLay was that he was the chief instigator of the coup effort, having approached Lindsey Graham on the House floor about proceeding with the ouster and then hosted a meeting of the rebels in his whip's office. Moreover, no one has determined exactly what the news report was that DeLay cited when demanding action from the rebels, leading some to speculate that it may have been a ruse to force members into action.

GINGRICH IS STILL GINGRICH. HE PLEDGED TO CHANGE HIS BEHAVIOR BUT RETURNED TO HIS UNDISCIPLINED WAYS.

Boehner was accused of waging a stealth campaign of revision to cover up his tracks. One House member noted that Boehner had been seen spending time with an Associated Press reporter just prior to an AP story favorable to Boehner and the rest of the leadership. Indeed, the day the coup story appeared in the *Hill*, leadership aides were telling every reporter in earshot to read the AP story by David Espo, which they said was the "true" version of what had transpired.

Precisely what all of this means for Gingrich is unclear. The diminishing band of Gingrich loyalists—most of them moderates like Sherwood Boehlert of New York—argue that he will be the stronger for surviving a coup. They also point out that securing Paxon's "resignation"—Paxon was told to resign by Gingrich's chief of staff, Arne Christenson—was an indication the speaker won't tolerate further insubordination. But the fact remains that the vast majority of House conservatives are disillusioned with Gingrich. "Newt may be stronger in the short term," says Indiana conservative David McIntosh, "but nothing has happened to remove the underlying problems."

Indeed, Gingrich is still Gingrich. He pledged to change his behavior after each previous burst of turmoil but always returned to his erratic and undisciplined ways. Further complicating his job is the disillusionment spreading now from the rank and file to his lieutenants in the leadership. This will make it increasingly difficult to manage the House's unruly factions. Indeed, moderate distrust of Armey, DeLay, and Boehner is now heightened; Boehlert says he has "no reason to doubt" the coup story, which shows "a lapse in judgment" by those involved. There's also the small problem for Gingrich of having to work with three people who plotted his downfall. All presumably recognize the only reason they retain their leadership positions is that they were elected by their colleagues—unlike Paxon, who served at Gingrich's request and therefore could be sacked.

Gingrich's herculean challenge now is to keep a lid on the tensions seething within the House GOP, at least until the budget is completed. That's easier said than done. House Republicans are more divided than at any point since the 1994 election. And Gingrich, who after repeated stumbles as speaker was already weak, has seen his position erode further. The joke from some second-term Republicans is that when they arrived in the House in 1995, they were inclined to trust the promises made by Gingrich and his leadership team. In 1996, their trust was tempered. Now it is gone, and they scrupulously verify promises the leadership makes. If any more promises are broken, House Republicans can turn to an obvious replacement: Paxon, the only member of the leadership who enjoys the confidence of both moderates and conservatives. The other possibility is that disgust over the leadership's handling of the coup will move the GOP rank and file to bring all of them down. ♦



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# Speaker Paxon?

**By Fred Barnes**

In *The Godfather, Part II*, Michael Corleone says his father taught him one thing: Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer. It's sage advice that House Speaker Newt Gingrich has ignored in firing Rep. Bill Paxon of New York as chairman of House leadership meetings.

Gingrich has now created a formidable rival. His enemies have someone to rally around in their effort to depose him. When? Probably next January, when House members return from their winter recess and Republicans must decide if they want to endure another election year with Gingrich as their most visible leader.

Paxon won't have to encourage the dissidents, and he has no obvious plans to. But he won't defend Gingrich either. "I look forward to helping advance the goals of the House Republican majority," he said in his letter of resignation. His only message for Gingrich was, "Good luck."

Why Paxon as Gingrich's successor? He's regarded as one of the most effective Republicans on Capitol Hill. Ironically, he organized the campaign last January to save Gingrich from being booted as speaker. At 43, he's popular with younger, passionately conservative members, having helped engineer their victories in the last two election cycles as head of the House Republican campaign committee. He's from the Northeast, the stronghold of Republican moderates, and he's on good terms with them. Also, Paxon comes across as genial and likable on television—certainly more so than Gingrich, Majority Leader Dick Armey, whip Tom DeLay, and John Boehner, chairman of the House GOP caucus.

Of the four Republican leaders who met secretly with dissidents in recent weeks, Paxon was actually the least interested in moving to overthrow Gingrich. When asked whether he'd be willing to challenge Gingrich for the speakership, he said he didn't know if that would work.

But Paxon made clear to the renegades he had lost confidence in Gingrich's ability to lead Republicans, so much so that he and DeLay wanted, at the least, to impose restrictions on Gingrich to prevent him from free-lancing.

Despite his involvement with the dissidents and their abortive scheming against Gingrich, Paxon did not intend to resign from his leadership post—until summoned to a series of meetings with House Republican leaders on the evening of July 15. In a session with Gingrich, however, he tentatively offered his resignation, thinking it would not be accepted. In fact, it wasn't exactly. Paxon left the meetings thinking he might be able to remain in the leadership.

Gingrich balked several times in his plan to fire Paxon, the only member of the leadership whose job depended on the speaker. The others are elected by the 228 GOP House members. But the next morning, Gingrich's advisers, Joe Gaylord in particular, urged him to follow through and force Paxon out. At 11 a.m., Arne Christenson, the speaker's chief of staff, informed Paxon his resignation was indeed being accepted.

Once a protégé of Jack Kemp, then of Gingrich, Paxon began to sour on the speaker this year. He was upset when Gingrich overruled Armey and allowed a risky floor vote on highway spending. He was later dismayed when Gingrich, on his own, negotiated a surrender to the White House on the disaster relief bill. Then last week, Gingrich undercut Republicans who'd been arguing, as Gingrich himself had, against making the $500 child tax credit refundable to people who pay no federal income taxes.

Paxon, first elected in 1988, will not become a backbencher. Instead, he is likely to play a prominent role in the House, only a different one. He's now in a position to give an honest reaction, in public, to Gingrich's decisions and the party's triumphs and failures on Capitol Hill. Just as important, the growing dissident faction believes he's bound to be available to seek the speaker's job at some point. For months, the question on Capitol Hill has been: If Gingrich is going to be ousted, who is the alternative? Now there's an answer. ♦

*Fred Barnes is executive editor of* The Weekly Standard.



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# My Hearings, Right or Huang

**By Andrew Ferguson**

*Tuesday, July 15*

Over the weekend, on *Meet the Press*, Chairman Thompson spoke ominously. "These things," he said, meaning his hearings into campaign fund-raising abuses, "are designed for the most part to be boring." Might I respectfully suggest to the chairman that this is not the sort of statement that makes a reporter want to leap from his bed each morning and race to the hearing room?

It doesn't matter, though, for today word has come down: Under no circumstances am I to get bored. Nor am I to count how many civilians are waiting in line to attend the hearings, which I did last week. "There's this impatience of reviewing the hearings as if it's the latest *Star Wars* movie, and are people waiting in line, and so forth," Bob Woodward announced on CNN's *Inside Politics* this afternoon. "And I think people who have been shooting at it ought to be a little more patient."

Even more chastening was this morning's editorial in the *Wall Street Journal*. "It had slipped our notice that Congressional [hearings are] now mainly supposed to serve as bread and circuses for the local sophisticates," said the *Journal*'s editors. "But if they're having a hard time staying awake, maybe they should give the summer interns a chance to find the relevance." The editorial followed a story in Sunday's *Washington Times*: "Liberal media yawn at revelations in campaign-fund hearings." As if in testimony to its own refusal to be bored, the *Times*'s lead story that morning—"Huang willing to talk under part immunity"—had already been its lead story five days earlier: "Huang offers Senate testimony under immunity." A story that refuses to die!

Maybe I've just been overchastened, but it seemed to me that the pace of today's hearings quickened considerably over last week's. The Republicans have made several procedural adjustments, taking into account the obtuseness of heavy-lidded reporters. From now on, Chairman Thompson will open each hearing with a recap of the previous hearing—the way the narrator of *The Green Hornet* used to announce at the beginning of each episode: "Our story thus far . . ." Thompson and his colleagues have also dispensed with round-robin questioning, so each witness suffers only one lead senatorial questioner. With luck this will eliminate much of the mind-numbing repetition we sat through last week. The way things are going I may not have to bring in my summer intern after all.

The best innovation is that, at the close of the hearing, a committee functionary rushes out with a single-page summary of what just happened. This is especially helpful to reporters who tend to fall asleep (I noticed several of them last week). But nobody dozed today. The committee unveiled several delightful documents. One, from the Democratic National Committee, demonstrates how a Hong Kong rich guy named Eric Hotung wangled a meeting with the president's national security adviser in exchange for a $100,000 soft-money donation. Others itemize the bonus of more than $500,000 that John Huang received from the Lippo Group, his former employers, before he went off to work at the Commerce Department. Several documents establish that Lippo shell companies made large contributions to the DNC, even though they were nearly bankrupt. The most explosive document, dated from 1992, shows John Huang explicitly requesting $50,000 from his bosses in Jakarta. "The funds are needed for: DNC Victory—Contribution," Huang wrote.

"Here's a clear trail of foreign money coming into U.S. elections," said Sen. Joe Lieberman—typically, the only Democrat to make the admission. Reporters have pegged Lieberman as the man to watch. The other Democratic senators are pleased to cast themselves as defense attorneys, intent on controlling the damage and pricking each little balloon of evidence the Republicans manage to inflate. But Lieberman, self-consciously moderate, calm, and nonpartisan, wants to emerge as the Conscience of the Hearings, the Still Center of the Partisan Turmoil, the Diogenes who goes off in search of an honest man and finds him in the mirror. At a break this morning he went out to face the

*Andrew Ferguson is senior editor of* The Weekly Standard



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cameras and announced that intelligence information does indeed show a Chinese plan to funnel money in the '96 elections—as Thompson had said last week, and as Democrats have been reluctant to admit. "I wanted to make this statement in fairness to Sen. Thompson," Lieberman said. Fairness? This is lonely territory he has staked out.

*Wednesday, July 16*

Sophisticates may complain that the hearings aren't resulting in any revelations, but at lunch today, staring at my runny lump of tuna fish as it wobbled on its whole wheat bread, I had an epiphany of my own: Capitol Hill is a dump. I'm not referring to the lovely leafy row-house neighborhood that goes by the name, but to the actual physical institution where the nation's business is transacted.

I don't think most Americans appreciate this. But most Americans haven't been up here for five of the last eight days, as I have, and most Americans haven't been to the salad bar in the Dirksen Office Building cafeteria. Pineapple chunks in sugar sauce, lettuce scraps made of plastic, slimy cucumber slices, piles and piles of beets; any combination for $2.39 a pound. The tables are littered with sticky Coke cans and cellophane wrappers and crusts of bread. The tablecloths, which are meant to lend an imperial touch, are wadded up and stained and mysteriously damp. When the political worker bees go to the sundry shops to snag a candy bar, they find a store straight out of East Berlin a week before the Wall fell. Half the shelves are empty, and the rest are stocked according to socialist logic: fifteen cases of Mentos, one tube of toothpaste with the top unscrewed. Then the worker bees walk through hallways strewn like a battlefield with broken and upended furniture to their cubicles, where they work two or three people to a space, in service of a vain blowhard who will have an aneurysm if he doesn't get that breakout on oil-refinery tax expenditures in time for his speech to the National Wholesalers.

No wonder everyone's so cranky. They don't want to be here any more than I do, and their solution is to make everyone else as miserable as they are. It's working. The Republicans had a good day yesterday—their proof of Huang's $50,000 illegal foreign donation from 1992 made all the front pages—and so the Democrats, with the exception of Lieberman, were even surlier than usual. The bickering between Arlen Specter and John Glenn grew so heated at one point that Glenn said, "Look, Arlen . . ." This is how the Senate works. If you get really, really mad at somebody, you call him by his first name.

The Democrats continued their damage control. A pair of bureaucrats who gave Huang intelligence briefings at Commerce were called in to testify dramatically behind a translucent screen. They testified, somewhat undramatically, that Huang received classified information on China, though (unknown to them) he had no responsibilities in that area of policy.

Carl Levin's climactic question was typically penetrating: "Did you ever see anything that would lead you to believe that Mr. Huang was passing secret information to China?" What were the bureaucrats supposed to say? "You bet! That's why we told him all those secrets!" Instead they said no. And Sen. Levin took this as further proof that Huang wasn't a security risk.

And of course Huang may not have been. But it began to emerge slowly today what he definitely was: an affirmative-action hire. Jeffrey Garten, who was Huang's boss at Commerce, testified today that Huang was "walled off" from Chinese matters because "he was totally ineffective."

Why was he hired then? "I think the major reason," Garten said in his deposition, "was that Secretary [Ron] Brown was quite adamant that we have ethnic diversity . . . and I think at that time, we had no Asian Americans."

The committee released Huang's Commerce Department job appraisal, and it is a masterpiece of language inflation: "Mr. Huang managed and directed myriad of issues [sic] which cut across more than one region ensuring the effectiveness and timely execution of the International Economic Policy's programs. . . . Mr. Huang leads IEP's diversity group. He attended diversity and all other mandatory training in FY 1995 and required/ensured that all subordinate supervisors attended." Give that man a raise!

After the hearings, the Republicans held a background briefing for reporters in a hearing room in the Dirksen building. The room has a towering ceiling and is dimly lit, lending an air of mystery to the proceedings. Deep Throat would feel right at home. The briefing is another of this week's innovations—to fix in everyone's mind the story line the committee is trying to lay out. Incredibly, however, even on background, the lawyers refuse to acknowledge they have a story line to lay out.

"As I have told you and told you," said one counsel, "there is no grand theory we're trying to establish. This is an eight-week effort to look at the process."

But this is ludicrous on its face. From the millions of pages of subpoenaed documents and dozens of depositions, the committee's Republicans have carefully selected a set of facts to present in public: John



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Huang raised illegal funds; he worked for a foreign conglomerate, Lippo, many of whose operations are half-owned by the Chinese government; he was hired at Commerce at the suggestion of a Lippo consultant; he specifically requested intelligence briefings on China that he was not supposed to get; he made apparently unauthorized visits to the Chinese Embassy; he had unusual access to the White House and the president; he used a private office across the street from Commerce, where he quietly received faxes, Federal Express packages, and phone calls; the White House then pressured the DNC to hire him, after which he continued to raise illegal funds, perhaps Chinese in origin. And all of this has been presented after Thompson declared dramatically that a Chinese plan existed to interfere in the American political process.

"There is no grand conspiracy theory we're pushing," the counsel repeated. "If there's a theory, it's in your minds, not ours."

We sophisticates may be easily bored, but we're not stupid. Well, not all of us.

## *Thursday, July 17*

The evolution of scandal in the Clinton era, as a sociological phenomenon, continues to dazzle. To wit: A few weeks ago, Clinton defenders gleefully released evidence that Paula Jones had once bragged about her hotel-room encounter with then-Governor Clinton. "Sure he nailed her," they seemed to be saying, "and she *loved* it." In the funhouse world of Clinton scandals, this is taken to be exculpatory.

I thought of this after this morning's hearing, where we heard about the more than 60 visits John Huang made to the White House as a low-ranking Commerce official, sometimes to see Clinton in the White House residence. As we filed out, a DNC operative cheerfully handed us a stack of news clips and a printout from Lexis-Nexis. "At least 53 articles discuss the ties between John Huang and the White House," said the printout. It indeed seemed exhaustive, even citing articles from "Ethnic NewsWatch, Filipino Express."

This is how far we've come: The Clintonites are now passing around clips damaging to their own case to convince reporters that they have nothing to write about, because all the bad stuff is old news. The DNC is proceeding on the central thesis of Clinton-era scandals: If it's been in the paper, it can't be bad.

No one should be surprised, then, that the press is confused. Consider two ledes from this morning's papers.

"Testifying behind a screen to shield his appearance," the *Los Angeles Times* wrote, "a CIA agent told Senate investigators Wednesday that he shared classified information with former Commerce Department official John Huang, not knowing that a higher-up considered Huang 'totally unqualified' to handle sensitive foreign trade issues. . . . In the end, the witnesses merely heightened the mystery. . . ."

Now this from the *New York Times*: "Screened from public view, an official of the CIA today told the Senate committee examining campaign finance abuses that briefings for John Huang on classified information about Asia had been part of routine procedure at the Commerce Department and had not been sought by Mr. Huang. . . . 'I am assuming he used the information properly,' [the CIA official] said."

Perhaps we shouldn't be too hard on the New Yorkers, since the Angelenos have beaten them in this story at every turn of events—and the *L.A. Times* continues to offer, day by day, the best coverage of the hearings. But it's worth noting that, in their lede, the New Yorkers deliberately set out not to excite reader interest in the story but to deflect it—a curious news judgment, given the incendiary possibilities. And the snooziness of the *New York Times*'s coverage is reflected by the networks, who slavishly take their cues from the appropriately named Gray Lady. Two of the three network newscasts haven't even mentioned the hearings for two days.

Of course, there are times when I can't blame them. This afternoon, the hearings threatened (cliché ahead) *to break down amid partisan bickering*. (Do you think I could get a job at the *New York Times*?) The Republicans brought out one of their own to testify, a young committee lawyer named John Cobb. He had prepared a series of charts, which were blown up and presented on easels. They had bold-faced titles: "Huang's Access to Classified Information While At Commerce," for example, and several that said: "Huang Fundraising at Commerce?" The sinister implication was unmistakable, but under intense examination by the Democrats, young Cobb denied that there was any implication at all.

"Is it your testimony under oath," thundered Levin, "that there was no intention to create a particularly impression with these charts?"

It is customary, according to the Senate's centuries-long tradition of gentility, for a senator to humiliate a staffer only behind closed doors. But Levin was understandably incredulous. The Republicans can't long maintain that they're not building a circumstantial case against John Huang, even as they quite publicly build a circumstantial case against John Huang. The charts were insulting in another way, too. With



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their large graphics of telephones and piles of cash, they looked as though they had been designed by the same fellow who puts smiley-face suns and frowning rainclouds on TV weathermaps. Political operatives often assume reporters are stupid—sometimes a safe enough assumption—but if reporters think you think they're stupid, they will never forgive you. And the charts insulted the intelligence of journalists as a class. Imagine something that could insult the intelligence of Diane Sawyer.

Then the partisan bickering began in earnest, as the committee decided whether to grant immunity for a series of potential witnesses. My notes from this point on are just doodles. At last the committee went into executive session to yell at each other in private. Outside the hearing room, the ever-reliable Lanny Davis, the White House special counsel, was handing out copies of an editorial from *Roll Call*, a Capitol Hill paper. He raised one above his head like a corner newsboy and called out, "What about Congress? What about those fund-raising scandals? When is Senator Thompson going to look at Congress?" But none of the reporters appeared terribly interested. We'd seen enough of Congress for the week. ♦

# The Sins of a Self-styled Citizen Lobby

**By Mary Jacoby**

Tom Andrews, national program director for the "watchdog" group Citizen Action, stood on a platform at a Washington hotel last March brandishing a broom. Under a banner that read "Campaign for Clean Elections," the former Democratic congressman from Maine unveiled for reporters Citizen Action's reform plan to "stop the endless and out-of-control money chase of office holders for private special-interest money." Making a couple of awkward swipes with the broom at a laundry bag stuffed with fake dollars, Andrews declared: "This organization is committed to sweeping this system clean!"

Citizen Action could start the process by opening its own books to public inspection. With brazen hypocrisy, the self-styled consumer group has raked in hundreds of thousands—and possibly millions—of dollars from the very same "special interests" it purports to oppose, interviews and documents show.

Although much of its money has come from interests traditionally allied with the Left—unions and trial lawyers—the group has also accepted largess from a pro-tobacco coalition. In exchange, Citizen Action has lobbied for public-policy positions supported by its donors: against tort reform and cigarette taxes and for universal health care. Passing itself off as a non-partisan consumer group, it has been a conduit for union money spent to defeat Republican candidates for federal office.

Okay, so duplicity and money-grubbing are nothing new in Washington. And they're certainly not confined to one side of the ideological spectrum. But in the case of Citizen Action, the organization has so pushed the normal boundaries that even some of its former allies on the left have thrown up their hands in disgust. Meanwhile, federal prosecutors in New York have implicated Citizen Action in an alleged scheme to launder money from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters back into the reelection campaign of union president Ron Carey, who won a narrow victory over James Hoffa last year.

The revelations about the Teamsters prompted independent Citizen Action state affiliates in Ohio and Indiana to call for "dissolution of the scandal-wracked national" Citizen Action. The founder of the organization's flagship state chapter in Illinois, meanwhile, recently resigned after federal investigators questioned him about a possible $1 million check-kiting scheme involving the organization's accounts.

The last but not least of Citizen Action's troubles is a number of published reports that it spent $7 million to defeat GOP congressional candidates in the 1995-96 election cycle. The reports have caught the eye of investigators on Sen. Fred Thompson's probe of campaign-finance abuses, which in a second phase of hear-

*Mary Jacoby is a Washington freelance writer.*



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ings will explore the role of soft money and outside organizations in politics.

All of this adds up to some pretty deep trouble for Citizen Action, which claims more than 2 million members and bills itself as the nation's largest consumer organization. Reached at home in Washington, Ira Arlook, Citizen Action's executive director, referred all inquiries to Citizen Action spokesman Ed Rothschild, who did not return repeated phone calls. Neither did Tom Andrews, the broom-wielding former congressman.

It's never been a secret that Citizen Action is sympathetic to unions. But what's less well known is how extensively unions fund this supposedly independent "consumer" group.

Citizen Action has taken at least $1.3 million from unions since 1990. The actual amount is undoubtedly much higher. But federal tax law does not require Citizen Action, a non-profit 501 (c) 4 organization, to reveal the source of its funds or itemize contributions of less than $5,000.

However, THE WEEKLY STANDARD obtained lists of large contributors to Citizen Action between 1990 and 1995. (The only year for which information could not be obtained was 1993.) The $1.3 million figure for union contributions was calculated using these lists and Teamsters documents from 1996. In all, Citizen Action raised nearly $3 million in 1995, the last year for which tax information is available. But it ended the year more than $2 million in the red, returns show.

What do the unions get in return for their money? The answer is simple: support from what appears to be an outside, independent consumer movement for their public-policy goals. The charade is easy to carry off; because the public and most reporters don't know that unions are funding Citizen Action, the connection between their political activities is rarely made.

In 1995, for example, records show that the AFL-CIO—where Citizen Action director Arlook's wife, Karen Nussbaum, directs a women's labor project—gave the group $45,000. Another $50,000 came that year from the United Auto Workers, and Local 1199 of the Drug, Hospital and Health Care Employees union gave $25,000. The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees kicked in $5,000.

These unions, in turn, were the moneybags behind an attempt to throw out the newly elected Republican Congress called "Project '95." Much of their campaign was conducted through Citizen Action. Also in 1995, Citizen Action and unions joined together to form the "Save America's Families Coalition" to defeat the House GOP's budget plan. And Citizen Action and unions have long lobbied together for a universal health-care plan. Yet it was the rare news article on these issues that portrayed Citizen Action as anything but an independent, grass-roots consumer group.

Simply being in bed with the unions—or any other special interest—is no shocker. But in June, Citizen Action's ties to the largest of all the unions, the Teamsters, crossed the line into scandal. Federal prosecutors in New York alleged that a Washington, D.C., political consultant named Martin Davis helped launder prohibited Teamsters money back into the reelection of Teamsters president Carey last November.

The scheme worked this way, according to a federal complaint: The Teamsters and Davis steered contracts to an organization (later identified as Citizen Action) and a consultant (later identified as Michael Ansara, a Citizen Action charter member who owns a political telemarketing firm in Massachusetts), ostensibly for advertising and get-out-the-vote efforts in connection with the 1996 elections. In reality, however, Citizen Action and Ansara used portions of the Teamsters contract money to reimburse Ansara's wife, Barbara Arnold, for two contributions totaling $95,000 she made to a pro-Carey fund named "Teamsters for a Corruption-Free Union," the complaint says.

Citizen Action, meanwhile, appeared to make out like a bandit in the transaction; it apparently kicked back only $75,000 to Carey out of a whopping $475,000 it got from the Teamsters in October 1996.

Teamsters spokeswoman Nancy Stella says the $475,000 "was for a lot of activities that Citizen Action carried out for us in the federal elections," including get-out-the-vote activities and advertising. As for the allegations that Citizen Action helped launder money to the Carey campaign, the union said in a statement that it is "doing and will continue to do everything possible to assist in the government's efforts to ascertain the facts. The [Teamsters] views any misuse of Teamster funds as a matter of utmost gravity."

Trial lawyers, too, have worked closely with Citizen Action. The group and its state affiliates have long opposed tort reform, on the state and national levels. And trial-lawyer groups have anted up, giving Citizen Action at least $330,000 since 1990, tax records show.

That trial lawyers are giving money to Citizen Action in order to influence elections is apparent from state filings in Illinois. In 1995, the Illinois Trial Lawyers Association PAC gave at least $28,875 to Citizen Action's state affiliate. The trial lawyers' PAC then



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went on to itemize exactly what the money was for: It listed dollar amounts for "consulting" performed by Citizen Action next to the names of legislative and other local candidates.

Among the recipients of trial-lawyer-association largess, as filtered through Citizen Action, was Illinois state legislative candidate Mike Salvi. He's the brother of unsuccessful 1996 Illinois GOP Senate nominee Al Salvi, himself a plaintiff's attorney. The trial-lawyers association gave another $2,000 to a nice-sounding organization called the Coalition for Consumer Rights for polling on Mike Salvi's behalf. The address listed for the coalition was the same as Citizen Action's Chicago office.

Activists associated with Citizen Action don't see any problem with taking money from unions, trial lawyers, or any other group with deep pockets—as long as their interests mesh. But leaders of the Ohio and Indiana state chapters recently severed ties with the national organization when it began taking money from interests diametrically *opposed* to the group's mission.

In the spring of 1996, Citizen Action officials in Washington began circulating a memo among state affiliates announcing a campaign on electric-utility deregulation. Citizen Action's proposed go-slow approach was, curiously, the same position as that of the big utilities and nuclear facilities. It was *not* the position of the state affiliates, which had spent two decades fighting for deregulation as a means of lowering consumer prices and encouraging the use of more environment-friendly energy sources.

"We thought, 'What's going on here?'" says Paul Ryder, communications director for Ohio Citizen Action. "So we started to research it."

They found that Citizen Action proposed joining a national coalition on energy deregulation that included a California-based organization with close ties to the electric-utility industry. Then, Citizen Action in Washington circulated a draft of a proposed newspaper advertisement that—again—pushed the position of the large utilities.

When pressed, Arlook, national Citizen Action's executive director, told the state affiliates that an anonymous donor had given the organization $50,000 to work on electric-utility deregulation. Arlook claimed he did not know the identity of the donor, according to Ryder and Chris Williams, executive director of Citizens Action Coalition of Indiana.

The whole story sounded fishy to Williams. To this day, he thinks Arlook knew the donor but refused to identify it because the money was tied to the electric-utility industry. "And you don't take money from the utility companies. They're the enemies," Williams said. Arlook "tried to make the argument you take money where you can get it, strange bedfellows and all that. To me that's all a lot of crap."

Tensions worsened when Arlook came to Ohio for a meeting in the fall of 1996 to discuss the growing controversy. "Somebody on the Washington staff said, 'What are you getting upset about *this* for? We've been taking money from the tobacco industry for years,'" Ryder recalled. "We kind of gasped."

At that point, Arlook admitted that the national Citizen Action had been taking money from a tobacco-funded group called the Tobacco Industry Labor-Management Committee. Arlook said the grant had been for $96,000 in 1995, according to Williams and Ryder. During the debate over universal health care in 1993-94, Citizen Action fought against proposed excise taxes on cigarettes, arguing they were regressive. The state affiliates supported higher cigarette taxes as a means of discouraging smoking.

The national Citizen Action was "unilaterally reversing longstanding positions of the organization and going against the interests of the members of the organization for cash. That's called being at the trough," Ryder said.

The Ohio chapter disaffiliated with Citizen Action in November 1996. The Indiana chapter followed suit in January 1997.

At the campaign-finance-reform press conference in March, Tom Andrews called for placing spending limits on individual candidates—a proposal that is anathema to traditionally more flush Republicans. But he admitted that Citizen Action's proposals would do nothing to regulate the flow of special-interest money into tax-exempt organizations, such as Citizen Action. That's okay, Andrews said, because such organizations use the money to conduct "issues" campaigns that are vital to democracy.

"I know there are some in politics that hate the idea that candidates have to face real issues when they're campaigning," Andrews said, shaking his broom for emphasis.

Yet judging by the reluctance of Andrews and other Citizen Action officials to return phone calls, it looks as if *they* don't want to face certain issues, either. But they may be forced to, if federal investigators in New York get to the bottom of the Teamsters affair and Fred Thompson's committee decides to start asking questions. ♦



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# The Last Rhodesian

## *Ian Smith Pens His Memoirs*

**By Robert D. Novak**

"The man is a schizoid, there can be no doubt about it," an unidentified British civil servant was quoted as saying about Ian Smith in *Newsweek*'s December 19, 1966, cover story. "He's in turn inept, devious, erratic and honest." The magazine's cover was labeled "White Power in Africa," and the story described the last white prime minister of black Rhodesia as a stubborn, "intellectually unresourceful" reactionary denying political power to 4 million black Africans in a country ruled by 217,000 whites.

Ian Douglas Smith is barely remembered today, but 30 years ago he was viewed with fear and loathing by statesmen and journalists throughout the Western world. In a continent whose nascent independent states even then were led by tyrants, criminals, and murderers, Smith was trumpeted in the West's media as evil incarnate, the arch-villain of Africa.

This and other ironies are compiled in *The Great Betrayal*, Smith's memoir (published earlier this year in Britain to a chorus of catcalls). Self-described as "more British than the British," Smith was shot down, wounded, and decorated as a heroic RAF fighter pilot for the motherland in World War II. Smith recounts—still in wonderment after all these years—how he and his compatriots were later betrayed by forces that he thought were his allies in what he still calls the "Free World": Britain, the United States, and, most remarkably, the truly racist regime of South Africa.

Smith's warnings about the fate of his country have proven all too prescient. Rhodesia became one-party Zimbabwe, whose overwhelmingly black parliament (from which Smith was expelled) is a rubber stamp for Marxist prime minister Robert Mugabe, whose socialist policies have led to a declining economy and continued white flight. Only the West's providential victory in the Cold War prevented Rhodesia, and much of the rest of Africa, from coming under Moscow's rule. "After 16 years of Mugabe's Zimbabwe," Smith writes, "our fight to prevent the advent of Marxist-Leninist de facto, if not de jure, rule has been vindicated."

**Ian Smith**
***The Great Betrayal***
***The Memoirs of Africa's Most Controversial Leader***
Blake, 418 pp., $32.50

Smith, who still resides and farms in his African homeland, does not disguise his politically incorrect belief that the British Empire was "the greatest force for good the world had ever known" and that "colonialism was the spread of Western Christian civilization into areas which were truly 'darkest Africa.'" Rhodesia was "surrounded by countries riddled with corruption, incompetence, indolence, nepotism and all those other evil aspects of communist dictatorships." The blacks of Rhodesia "were better off than the blacks anywhere else in Africa, with more freedom, better justice and a higher standard of living."

Smith argues that a black population that "is still illiterate and does not understand a Western democratic system that is foreign to it" was hardly ready for the franchise. But if he once was intransigent about a black takeover of the government, that certainly was not the case by the time I first met him in Salisbury in 1977. He was ready then to hand his premiership to a black man, and I found no Rhodesian who still harbored hopes of maintaining white minority rule. By then, all Smith's Rhodesian Front wanted was to keep power from Mugabe and other Soviet-backed Marxists.

It was not a simple matter of Smith's being tardy in seeing the light. Whatever concessions white Rhodesians would make and whenever they would make them, they were always too little, too late. Even when the black Methodist bishop Abel Muzorewa replaced Smith as prime minister after free elections, it was not enough for Mugabe's Patriotic Front and his Kremlin-supplied guerrilla army. The wrong blacks were in power, in the view of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the non-white members of the British Commonwealth.

Not until new elections, tainted by terrorist intimidation of voters, had installed Mugabe in power were the rulers of the Third World satisfied. Since then, a one-party Zimbabwe, the devolution of its economy toward African standards, and the inevitable emigration of whites have attracted little attention among the governing circles in London and Washington who could not support a moderate

*Robert D. Novak is a veteran Washington reporter and columnist.*



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black government. Smith understands: "If a small country like Rhodesia had to be sacrificed as a morsel to feed the crocodile, that was an insignificant price to pay in order to buy time and secure some respite."

The cynicism of Perfidious Albion is reflected in a conversation with Harold Wilson, the Labor prime minister of the '60s, recorded by Smith. Said Wilson: "For you and me to come to an agreement is no problem. What we have to do is produce an agreement which I can sell to the rest of the world, and in particular to the OAU." Smith shot back: "That bunch of communist dictators." The response from Wilson: "You cannot divorce yourself from the world we live in."

Smith found that the Tories who alternated in power at Whitehall during the quarter-century when Rhodesia's fate was decided were not all that different from the socialists. "If we were not faced with Harold Wilson and the Labour Party using Rhodesia as a pawn in order to appease the OAU," Smith writes, "it was Ted Heath and the Conservatives using us as a bargaining chip in order to win votes in the House of Commons."

Smith did experience momentary elation when Margaret Thatcher became prime minister in 1979. But she soon "reneged on her promise of recognition [of the Muzorewa government] under pressure from Nigeria and Australia." The Iron Lady, in her memoirs, coldly ignores Smith and, with characteristic candor, admits that Muzorewa had fulfilled all the conditions for international recognition but that Soviet-backed African states insisted on Mugabe, who was continuing the bloody guerrilla war. "I was well aware that what the people of Rhodesia needed above all was peace and stability," she writes, in justifying her abandonment of democracy.

Lady Thatcher concludes that "it was sad that Rhodesia/Zimbabwe finished up with a Marxist government in a continent where there are too many Marxists maladministering their countries' resources," but begs off by pleading "political and military realities." Those "realities" were pressed upon her by her deplorable foreign minister, Lord Carrington, of whom Smith says, "During my years in the world of politics I have come into contact with my fair share of devious characters, but I regard Carrington as the most two-faced of all."

**Ian Smith**

The United States did not get involved deeply in Rhodesia until the Carter administration, when, predictably, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance functioned as the instrument of the Congressional Black Caucus. Smith reports that Henry Kissinger, whose contact with the Rhodesian question as secretary of state was tangential, met with him during the Carter administration: "He conceded the justice of my case, and assured me of his continuing wish to help . He once again paid tribute to the manner in which I had conducted myself and said this would be recorded in his memoirs." I checked and found, not entirely to my surprise, that Ian Smith is not mentioned in Kissinger's memoirs.

But surpassing the British and the Americans in deviousness were the South Africans. Indeed, Smith sees his country's problems as beginning in 1948 when Field Marshal Jan Christian Smuts's South African government was defeated by the racist National party—"one of the most profound events affecting the history of Africa." Smith argues that the imposition of South African apartheid began a chain reaction that led to bloodshed and tyranny in Angola, Mozambique, and certainly Rhodesia. This tale of accumulated perfidy reaches its nadir in 1974 when South African prime minister John Vorster (surely the most disagreeable public figure I ever have interviewed) met Smith and told him of his meeting with black leaders to the north:

> "I've got them eating out of my hands," he [Vorster] said, holding his hands out cup-like in front of me. "They have promised that if I can help them solve the Rhodesian problem they will acknowledge South Africa as we are today."



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"With your apartheid intact?" I asked.

"Certainly," he replied.

"But you don't believe them?" I queried.

"My dear friend," he said. "You've been out of touch with the world so long that you are unaware of the changes that have taken place."

I thought for a few seconds and then said: "I hope your expectations are fulfilled, but I would say to you that I have always very much been a part of Africa, have lived among and have a very great understanding of the people, and I wonder if because of your policy of apartheid you haven't lost touch with black Africa."

Smith did not realize it then, but that sealed his doom. With South African support, he could head off global sanctions and the guerrillas. But the South Africans "were using the Rhodesian issue as a decoy to distract attention from their problem." The "unrelenting" pressure from Pretoria reached the point in 1979 where the white supremacist South African regime objected to any white ministers at all in the Rhodesian regime.

I saw Smith on his most recent visit to the United States, and he still exudes the "schoolboy obstinacy" that British prime minister Alec Douglas-Home complained about 30 years ago. At age 78, he has not given up hope for a democratic, capitalist Zimbabwe. He proposes a sub-Saharan common market led by Nelson Mandela, described by Smith as "the first black statesman." And he never has forgiven the erstwhile friends who betrayed him and his nation.

Smith may not fully appreciate that Rhodesia was doomed, a victim of the Cold War. Robert Mugabe never could have seized power had it not been for Moscow's patronage, and the acquiescence of London and Washington—if not of Pretoria—was based on global strategy. Promises were broken, lies were told, and allies were betrayed. In the fight for the survival of the West, fair treatment of the white tribe of old Rhodesia was hardly given a moment's thought. ♦



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# Down Kevorkian's Slope

## *The Case Against Physician-assisted Suicide*

**By Nelson Lund**

While awaiting the Supreme Court's recent decision on assisted suicide, the pundits came to an unusual consensus. Without the usual left-right discord, most commentators agreed that this dangerous practice should not be constitutionalized. The Supreme Court has now agreed, unanimously refusing to create a broad new constitutional right to assisted suicide.

**Wesley J. Smith**
***Forced Exit***
***The Slippery Slope from Assisted Suicide to Legalized Murder***
Times Books, 304 pp., $25

But the underlying issue is far from settled. Five justices were careful to signal that they might well create some kind of constitutional right in a future case involving different facts. More important, the court's decision did not even suggest that Congress or the states would be forbidden to legalize assisted suicide. And despite the current trend of elite thinking, there appears to be no genuine national consensus on the issue. Authorities in Michigan have been notoriously unsuccessful in persuading juries to convict Jack Kevorkian, the most extreme and flamboyant of the "assisters." And public-opinion polls consistently show large majorities favoring assisted suicide. One state, Oregon, has already voted to legalize the practice in a popular referendum.

Wesley J. Smith's *Forced Exit* shows why the public should reject Kevorkianism in all its forms. Laying out his case with clarity and restraint, Smith blends reasoned argument with blood-curdling anecdotes, proving beyond a reasonable doubt that legalizing assisted suicide would be a sure step on the road to bureaucratized euthanasia. Smith also recognizes that the current controversies over assisted suicide are just one manifestation of the forces pushing us toward legalized murder, and that avoiding the slippery slope may require a serious reorientation of our public policies and attitudes.

Smith's most straightforward and compelling argument is that legalizing assisted suicide would create terrible perverse incentives. Proponents of the practice emphasize the apparent injustice of denying fully competent people who are near death the opportunity to make a rational choice to avoid the expensive, painful, and degrading treatments that modern medicine offers many of us at the end of life. But the grim prospect of an over-medicalized death (which probably explains the popularity of assisted suicide in polls) is a demonstrably foolish basis for public policy. First, patients already have the legal right to refuse unwanted treatments. Second, and much more important, most real patients simply do not fit the abstract model of the rational, autonomous chooser. On the contrary, people near the end of fatal illnesses typically suffer from maladies ranging from clinical depression to terrifying loneliness to feelings of guilt about the burdens they impose on others. In these circumstances, patients are highly vulnerable to manipulation by their families and, especially, their doctors. Families and doctors will often have strong incentives to prefer that the patient die sooner rather than later and thus to become subtly manipulative, even without realizing it.

Anyone who doubts that such incentives operate on family members should read a few of Smith's well-documented horror stories. But even those who believe that families are generally immune to the low dictates of self-interest should at least acknowledge that physicians are not. Besides the fact that caring for the incurable is tough on a doctor's patience and pride, brute financial incentives created by our emerging system of managed care guarantee that physicians will increasingly be encouraged to promote the inexpensive alternative of a hastened death in place of more expensive life-prolonging options. Doctors have already perfected the art of offering "options" designed to ensure that the patient chooses what the physician wants.

If only the last few days or weeks in the lives of the dying elderly were at stake, the problem would be serious but limited. But this is only the beginning. Defining "terminal" illness and estimating its duration is a notoriously inexact exercise, and the label "terminal" is frequently applied to patients who prove to have many years to live. More profoundly, as Smith rightly stresses, there is simply no way to prevent physician-assisted suicide from leading physicians to kill not only those patients who have asked for it, but those who have not, as well. Once doctors begin deliberately hastening patients' deaths, they will be forced to make judgments about which patients' lives are worthy of continuation. Unless they adopt a policy of providing lethal poisons to anyone who asks—including lovelorn college students and those temporarily deranged by recreational drugs—doctors will immediately assume a role that conflicts with their responsibility as healers. And once they take on that role, nothing will stop them from succumbing to the temptation to decide that some pa-



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tients who have not requested death deserve it.

This temptation will be most powerful in exactly those cases where the patient is incapable of giving consent—not only the comatose, but also handicapped children and those suffering from a wide range of disorders involving senility, dementia, depression, and psychosis. And from here, it is only a short step to deciding that some competent patients who affirmatively wish to continue living simply fail to understand that death would really be for the best, especially when the doctor is aware that treating this individual may divert scarce medical resources from another, more promising patient.

This logic has already played itself out in other nations. The Netherlands' quick slide down the slippery slope during the last two decades has rightly been given considerable public attention. There is strong evidence that Dutch physicians engage in the widespread euthanizing of non-consenting victims, either for the benefit of the family or because the doctor decides that the quality of the victim's life is too poor. Smith's summary of the Dutch case is excellent, but even better is his discussion of Nazi Germany's earlier experience with euthanasia. Although this example has received less attention, German doctors eagerly went on a voluntary rampage against "useless eaters" the moment the government endorsed it, and they continued the program even after Hitler withdrew his approval. The arguments for the program—eerily similar to many we hear today—had become respectable well before the Nazis came to power, and the same kind of thinking enjoyed a cachet in the United States during the '20s and '30s. Indeed, we might have gone down the slippery slope ourselves except that euthanasia acquired a bad name from its association with the Nazis' other programs for dealing with "unworthy" lives.

Smith's point is not that legalized euthanasia will lead to Nazism, but that legalized euthanasia is necessarily politicized euthanasia. This is especially alarming because American medicine itself is in any event becoming increasingly politicized. As Smith shows, euthanasia has a rapidly maturing first-cousin in the practice of granting and withholding health care (including food and water) on the basis of "quality of life" evaluations. In a world where doctors, HMO administrators, and politicians dole out medical care according to their own notions of who deserves it the most, politically favored groups like AIDS patients and pregnant women may do well, but only at the expense of those with less powerful lobbyists and patrons: low-birthweight babies, advanced cancer patients, and maybe those, like cigarette smokers, who have engaged in politically incorrect behavior. In that world, the distinction between saving resources by withholding food, water, and medicine, and saving resources by the (more humane) expedient of a lethal injection is bound to become untenable.

What, then, should be done? If the slide down the slippery slope can be arrested by an intelligent and accessible explication of the route ahead, Smith's book could hardly be bettered. But as he himself recognizes, the economics of health care will



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probably ensure that this is not enough. Unfortunately, his recommendations for dealing with this problem tilt heavily toward more of the same policies that have created the current situation: more taxes and more government regulation, all ostensibly in the service of "compassion" and "community."

Consider for a moment, as Smith does not, that medicine does not have to be administered with the high level of government involvement we see today. Health care used to be allocated, like most other services, largely by the price mechanism. Patients bought what they were willing and able to pay for, and the indigent were taken care of (less well than the rich, no doubt) at public expense or, very significantly, by a substantial network of religious charities.

Three large changes, all attributable to government, have transformed that system. First, government funding has helped create a large new supply of expensive medical tools. Second, government has largely displaced the religious charities in caring for the indigent, along with many millions who are far from indigent. Third, wacky wage-control policies adopted in the 1940s caused employers to take evasive action by offering additional compensation in the form of health insurance, and the tax laws ensured that this would eventually become the dominant source of private funding for medical care.

Market forces now have hardly any direct effect on consumers, and patients have diminishing control over their doctors. Trying to repair the resulting mess with more government spending and more government regulation will only heighten the politicization of medicine and increase the pressure to choose beneficiaries and victims according to the perceived worth of their lives.

Apart from his naïve preference for governmental over market mechanisms, Smith's principal prescription for the underlying disease is a call for moral reformation: the creation of "true community" based on the "equality-of-human-life ethic." Perhaps because he wants to persuade the widest possible audience, Smith advocates a pretty innocuous reformation that is limited in scope and secular in nature. The youngest and most vulnerable are left out, for Smith mentions unborn children only to note that one can make legal and logical distinctions between abortion and other forms of euthanasia (without noting that one could construct similar distinctions among all the other stages down the slippery slope). And the closest he gets to endorsing anything like religion comes with his invocation of a Zulu word he picked up from a friend.

In the end, Smith's allegiance to secular rationalism leaves him with a mere assertion—in the face of contrary claims that a "true community" is perfectly free to encourage or require the sacrifice of the community's most burdensome members. This does not detract from the persuasiveness of Smith's thoughtful and passionate argument against the legalization of assisted suicide. But it does suggest that the rationalization of murder will not stop in the face of his compelling contribution alone. ♦

# The Sound and the Furet

## *A Great Historian and His French Revolution*

**By Kenneth R. Weinstein**

François Furet, who died on July 12 at the age of 70, was the greatest living historian of the French Revolution, and far more. In an era when most of his peers were either dedicated subspecialists or social historians, Furet sought to revive the grand historiographical tradition of the 19th century, with its focus on political, personal, and intellectual forces. Through his powerful historical understanding, Furet often found himself at the center of public discourse in France as he helped to reshape his nation's understanding of itself.

In the 1960s and 1970s, most French schoolchildren were spoonfed a Marxist hagiography of the Revolution. Before Furet, as it were, the events of 1789 had been presented as the inevitable clash of economic forces: a rising bourgeoisie relegating the *ancien régime*, the by-product of an agricultural society, to the dustbin of history. The totalitarian violence of the Jacobin Terror of 1793 was seen as a patriotic attempt to secure popular rule by unifying the nation state. Historian Albert Mathiez's 1927 interpretation, parroted in textbooks for decades, simply projected Soviet propaganda onto the France of 1793, justifying the murderous tactics of Robespierre's Committee of Public Safety as an understandable consequence of civil and foreign war.

Given the cachet of Marxism among intellectuals in France—and the pride that the French themselves placed in the justice of their revolution—it took no small amount of courage for Furet to openly question what he termed the "revolutionary catechism" in the mid-1960s. To be sure, the Revolution had many critics of monarchist or counterrevolutionary stripe. But Furet was no reactionary: He had been an active member of the French Communist party,

*Kenneth R. Weinstein is director of the government reform project at the Heritage Foundation.*



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which he quit after the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956.

In his numerous volumes, most notably *The French Revolution* (coauthored with Denis Richet), *Interpreting the French Revolution*, and *Marx and the French Revolution*, Furet rejected economic determinism and the belief that the French Revolution was primarily a class struggle.

Furet noted that the revolution was at first a call for representative government in the face of a monarchy increasingly bent on consolidating power. But any hope for a liberal democratic revolution was quickly dashed. Furet argued against the idea that the Jacobin Terror was a response to either class conflict (there was none between Jacobins and other revolutionaries) or external aggression (the most violent stage of the Terror occurred when the foreign threat was long gone).

Furet found the most convincing explanation for the Terror in the works of Tocqueville and Augustin Cochin, both of whom understood its ideological character. Rather than ordinary tyrants who killed for personal gain, Robespierre and his ilk were a new breed of man, secular idealists, under the sway of intellectuals, who were willing to sacrifice their countrymen in the name of the regeneration of mankind.

Having fallen prey to this utopian spirit in his own dalliance with communism, Furet remained obsessed with coming to terms with it. In 1995, he published *The History of an Illusion: An Essay on the Communist Idea in the Twentieth Century*, a French bestseller now translated into sixteen languages. In it, Furet examines how antibourgeois ire drew millions to view the Soviet regime as the best hope for mankind, and willingly blinded them to its tyrannical character.

Having discredited Marxism, Furet played a central role in France's rediscovery of its long forgotten classical liberal tradition. 1789 had brought France the benefits of a democratic social state. But the revolutionary upheaval caused this democratic society to spend more than a century seeking a suitable regime of civic equality and political liberty. To understand this turmoil, in *Revolutionary France, 1770-1880*, Furet turned to such men as Tocqueville, Benjamin Constant, and François Guizot. He sought to give French liberalism an intellectual home in 1985, when he founded the Raymond Aron Institute for Political Research in Paris, which quickly became one of France's pre-eminent institutions of learning.

François Furet

Chas Fagan

Furet's devotion to the liberal democratic tradition led him to teach each year at the University of Chicago's Committee on Social Thought. Like Tocqueville a century and a half before, Furet believed that liberal democracy in France could be invigorated through a deeper appreciation of America. But for all his admiration of America, Furet was increasingly worried that it was drifting away both politically and intellectually from Europe.

Furet was also perturbed by the postmodern corruption of American university life, fearing that it would rebound, as has often been the case, in a more virulent form in Europe. Furet vehemently denounced political correctness and France's creeping multiculturalism, which hid under the guise of *le mouvement antiraciste*. For these pronouncements and his antirevolutionary historiography, Furet came to be, in the words of one friend, "the most attacked man in France." When a writer denounced Furet last year in the French press as the toady of certain "fascist" (i.e., politically conservative) American foundations (most notably the John M. Olin Foundation in New York) that supported his work, he sued for defamation and won in court.

For years, Furet stood largely alone in his attempt to impartially evaluate, and thereby moderate pride in the Revolution. More recently, though, he began to garner long overdue accolades. Just last March, Furet was awarded France's highest cultural honor: election to the Académie Française. But the title of *académicien* was arguably only the second-greatest honor that France bestowed upon him. Its greatest honor by far was bestowed informally in 1989, during the French Revolution's bicentennial, when it became apparent to all that Furet had won over the minds of his countrymen and had come to be seen as the Revolution's pre-eminent interpreter. ♦



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# Dancer from the Dance

## *Alexandra Danilova's Legacy*

**By Claudia Winkler**

"Only connect," said E.M. Forster. Alexandra Danilova's motto could have been, "Only distinguish."

In a notable passage in her memoirs, the ballerina, who died last week at 93, gently chides young dancers for too readily sinking to their knees in taking their bows or curtain calls. This, she says, is "too much."

Hers, to be sure, was a way of thinking formed by the *ancien régime*. "In Russia," she writes, "we were taught never to touch our knees to the floor when taking a bow unless there was royalty in the house; we were to go on our knees only to royalty or to God." Overusing what ought to be an ultimate expression of humility is "like talking all the time in superlatives—the most, the greatest, the best. And before long, the mediocre is called the best, and the best is nothing special, because there is no longer any name for it; the highest distinction has already been spent."

At the Imperial School of the Ballet, on Theater Street in St. Petersburg, rigorous distinctions were observed. In Danilova's years as a boarder there, from 1911 to 1920, only two pupils (Olga Spessivtseva and Felia Doubrovska) graduated with a perfect grade of twelve. "The rest of us, no matter how good we were, were given eleven, or ten, or nine. After the Revolution, this scale was eliminated completely. But often I think back on it, because it reserved a place in our minds for the utmost."

*Claudia Winkler is a managing editor of* The Weekly Standard.

She goes on: "At the end of my last performance [in 1957], taking my final curtain calls, I spread the flowers I had been sent at my feet, to flatter the senders; and as a gesture of thanks for the support and devotion I had received over the course of my career, I went down on my knee to my audience." Here was a worthy occasion: a dancer's farewell to her public.

Photofest

Danilova first trod the boards of the Maryinsky Theater as a child in a crowd scene in the opera *Faust* starring the great Feodor Chaliapin. She had her dancing début at 9, leading the children's mazurka in the last act of *Paquita*. Her professional life would keep her always near the center of one of the far-reaching artistic developments of the century: the spreading influence of Russian ballet in Europe, then America.

At school, the brilliant George Balanchine was an admired classmate, then a fellow junior member of the State Ballet. When his choreographic experiments proved too bold for the commissars, he was expelled from the company. Oppressed by the lack of artistic and personal freedom and tired of being hungry, cold, and threadbare in Bolshevik Leningrad, Balanchine, Danilova, and four others left the Soviet Union in 1924 for a summer season in Europe. They would not return—except, in Danilova's case, in advanced old age.

By the mid-'20s, the Ballets Russes was already famous across Europe, and the creative ferment generated by its director Sergei Diaghilev made the company a magnet for talent. Danilova and Balanchine were part of the last wave of Russian émigrés to work with the fabled impresario himself. In Monte Carlo, the company rehearsed a succession of new ballets, to be performed in London and Paris. Increasingly, Balanchine did the choreography, to scores by the likes of Prokofiev and Stravinsky, and with sets and costumes from such avant-garde figures as Giorgio de Chirico, Georges Rouault, and Coco Chanel.

Diaghilev's death in 1929 scattered the company. Danilova and Balanchine went their separate ways in search of work. He would eventually found the New York City Ballet. Danilova danced with several successor "Ballets Russes" in Europe. The 1930s were the period of her sparkling stage partnership with choreographer and dancer Léonide Massine. His colorful, often comedic creations suited her dramatic flair. Her can-can in Massine's *La Boutique Fantasque* and her rendition of the street dancer in his *Le Beau Danube* were among her most celebrated roles, along with the more elevated *Firebird*, *Swan Lake*, and her renowned interpretation of the charming and resourceful Swanilda in *Coppélia*.



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Danilova first toured in the United States in 1933. World War II anchored her on this side of the Atlantic, and she became a citizen in 1946. As the featured ballerina with one troupe or another, she danced in small towns from coast to coast, year in, year out, and after her retirement from the stage, Americans became the chief beneficiaries of her last incarnation, as a teacher.

It was a particularly happy, if incongruous, match. The queenly Danilova combined artistic sophistication and professionalism of a high order with a perfect lack of snobbery and a Russian *joie de vivre*. She writes of the joy it gave her to expose Americans to ballet, often for the first time; she especially loved performing for servicemen during World War II.

To her students (of whom I was privileged to be one, when she directed a *Nutcracker* in which I performed), she strove to communicate much more than technique: to convey a sense that theirs was a great tradition, to exemplify an ethic. She tried to instill in her pupils a broad hunger for learning. They should study music and go to art exhibits and seek out every variety of dance, especially folk dancing, from which the classical vocabulary derives. They should read history and literature, and so refine the cultural and psychological understanding they bring to different roles. Onstage and off, they should cultivate the glamour expected of a ballerina and never fail in their duty to their audience, whose "astonishment and enthusiasm" are the dancer's reward.

In her 1986 memoir, *Choura*, Danilova is candid about the disappointments of her personal life. They began early. She lost her parents in infancy and was sent to live with a grandmother in straitened circumstances. One morning, when she was 4, she found her grandmother dead. A kind and wealthy family took her in, but her foster mother died when she was 9, her foster father when she was 14, and at 20 she quit her homeland.

Although she never lacked for suitors, her two marriages were brief. The most treasured relationship, clearly, was with Balanchine, with whom she lived for some five years after he and his first wife parted. All their lives, they were joined by a mutual respect and a common dedication to the dance. She spent the final years of her working life based at his School of American Ballet in New York.

"Balanchine always said that dancers are aristocrats," Danilova writes, "that we were born into the ranks of a nobility that is based on art, and I agree. . . . [Dancers'] talent is God-given, and it sets them apart. It sustains and comforts them; it gives them a purpose. This has been my lifelong conviction, and I pass it along to my students, just as my teachers instilled in me as part of my training a sense of dignity and pride."

Both Danilova and the towering Balanchine, who died in 1983, enriched their new country with the best of the old. It is fitting that Danilova, who had no family, should have bequeathed her collection of paintings, sculptures, costume sketches, set designs, 19th-century dance prints, photographs, and souvenir programs to the superb dance archive at the New York Public Library. As always, the gesture was right. ♦



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# Not a Parody

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**A PROCLAMATION**
**by the**
**Governor of the State of California**

**WHEREAS,** breast-feeding benefits society as a whole by strengthening the bonds shared by mothers and infants, and is also an important part of preventive health care, providing mothers with short and long-term benefits, including decreased risk of breast and ovarian cancer; and

**WHEREAS,** compelling scientific evidence indicates that human milk is unique in that it provides infants with optimum growth and development, protection against specific infections and allergies, and positive long-term effects on their health and well-being; and

**WHEREAS,** the incidence and duration of breast-feeding among women in California are lower than the National Year 2000 Health Objectives, especially among economically disadvantaged women; and

**WHEREAS,** public health organizations throughout the Golden State are working to educate communities concerning the advantages of breast-feeding, and to create a supportive public environment in order that this important practice may be reestablished as a cultural norm;

**NOW, THEREFORE, I, PETE WILSON,** Governor of the State of California, do hereby proclaim August 1997 as Breast-Feeding Awareness Month in California, and I encourage all Californians to support Breast-Feeding as the preferred infant feeding method and a priority in our communities.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF** I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 10th day of June 1997.

Pete Wilson

Governor of California

**ATTEST:**

Bill Jones

Secretary of State

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